JONI MITCHELL HER SACRED QUEST

MOJO

The Music Magazine

135 REVIEWS
THE CORAL
JOANNA NEWSOM
BOWIE & MORE!

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

IGGY POP

HIS LIFE. HIS REBIRTH.

BY JOSH HOMME

THE KINKS
DAVE DAVIES' KOSMIK KAOS

DAMON ALBARN
CROWNED KING... IN MALI

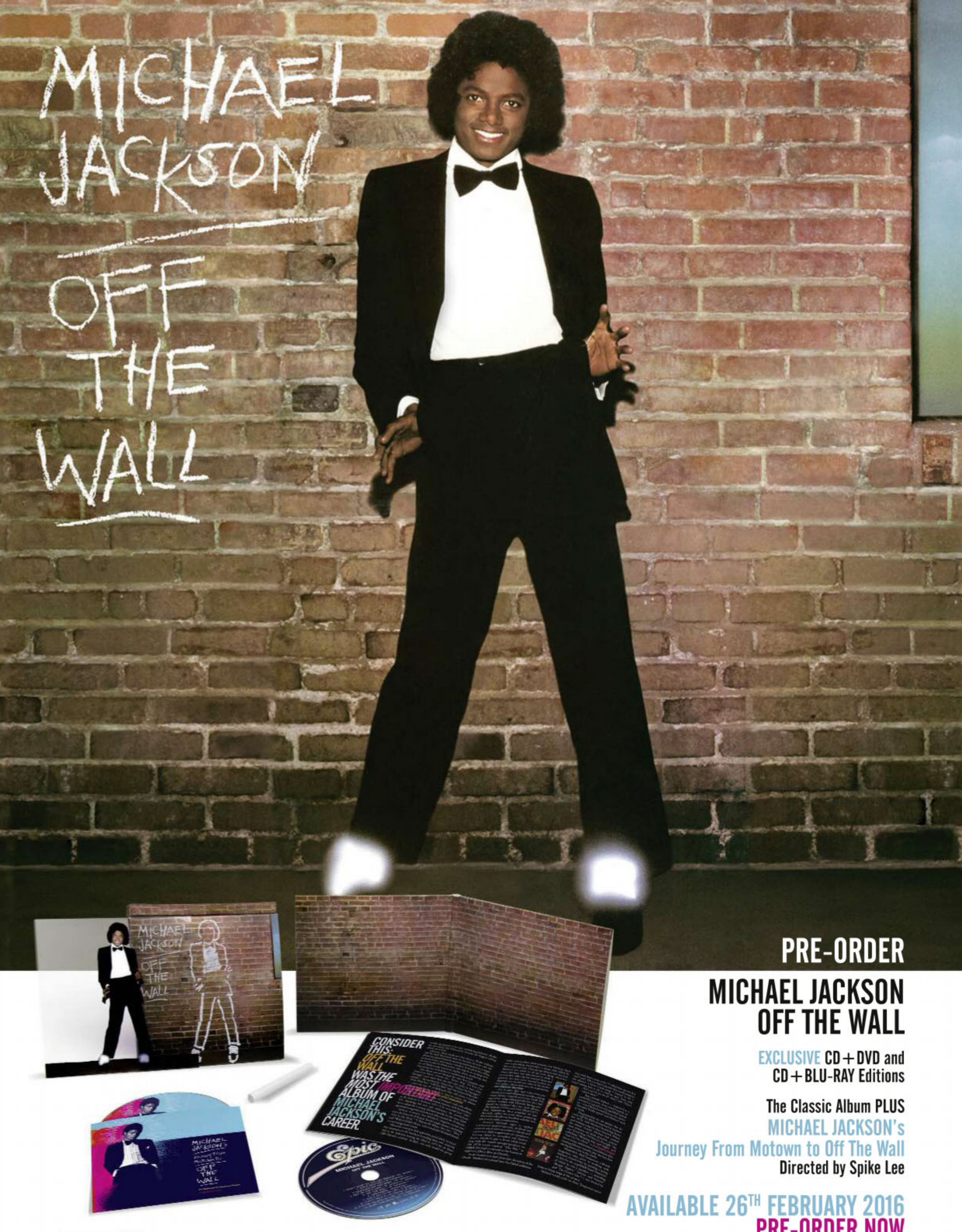
TRACEY THORN
MASSIVE ATTACK, MOZZER & ME

GLENN FREY
REMEMBERED

MICHAEL CHAPMAN
THE ALT-GUITAR GODFATHER

FIELD MUSIC
PRINCE-APPROVED PROG!

PLUS!
CARLY SIMON
MAGMA
GARY NUMAN
PULP
GRATEFUL DEAD
JOE BONAMASSA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> "I felt a kind of sweet giddiness when I met Mingus."
>
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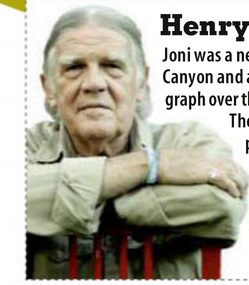

Henry Diltz

Joni was a neighbour of mine in Laurel Canyon and a friend I loved to photograph over the years (see feature p62). There will be plenty more photos of her in my upcoming slide show tour with Pattie Boyd this spring. More info at Henry Diltz/morrisonhotelgallery.com

blur: are shite

Keith Cameron

Twenty-five years after his first interview with Iggy Pop, it was a dream come true for MOJO's Contributing Editor to visit the punk rock legend at home in Miami (see feature p70). Keith found time to clock up some miles in training to run the 2016 London Marathon for Shelter. Sponsor him here: uk.virginmoneygiving.com/KeithCameron1

Ben Myers

On staff at Melody Maker at the age of 21, Ben Myers is an award-winning novelist, and writes for many publications including The Guardian, New Statesman and Caught By The River. His next novel, Turning Blue, is published late 2016. On page 46, he meets up with fellow north-easterners Field Music in his adopted home town of Hebden Bridge.

Paul Zollo, Julian Germain, Simon Fernandez, Christie Goodwin

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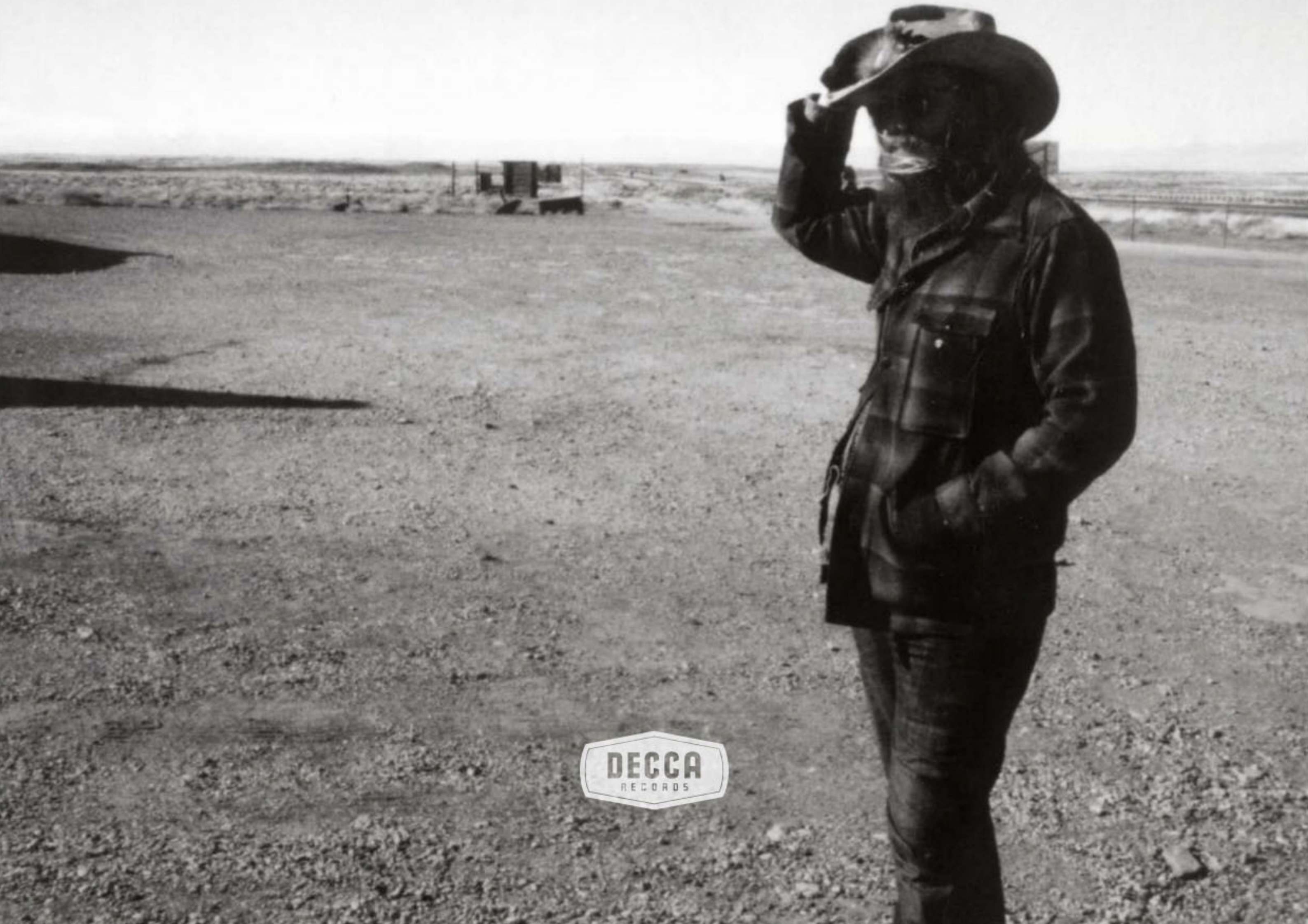


DECCA
RECORDS

GIMME DANGER

MOJO PRESENTS
A DESERT ROCK COMPILATION
IN ASSOCIATION WITH JOSH HOMME

EXCLUSIVE! FEATURES A BRAND NEW TRACK BY IGGY POP!

PLUS MARK LANEGAN, MASTERS OF REALITY, UNKLE & MORE…

1 IGGY POP
BREAK INTO YOUR HEART

On January 21 on The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, Iggy Pop announced his return, unveiling the entire *Post Pop Depression* project in the process. This track showcases the band's unique sonic blend, Iggy's glacial vocal underpinned by a trademarked Josh Homme riff. The latter's melodic sensibilities ensure it's a textured affair, packed with interweaved playing from Dean Fertita and Matt Helders. Read Josh Homme on the recording and the significance of this track on page 81.

2 MARK LANEGAN
HARVEST HOME

When grunge moodists Screaming Trees split in 2000, Mark Lanegan joined Homme in Queens Of The Stone Age and has since contributed to five of their albums, including their triumphant 2013 release *…Like Clockwork*. A firm Leonard Cohen fan and a man with a distinctive voice of his own, Lanegan has also continued to enjoy a fruitful solo career. His ninth studio album, 2014's *Phantom Radio*, featured this evocative, driving tune co-written with QOTSA associate Alain Johannes.

3 MASTERS OF REALITY
COUNTING HORSES

Often referred to as the godfather of Desert Rock, Masters Of Reality leader Chris Goss refutes that notion, yet his band's 1988 self-titled debut helped reconnect modern rock with its psychedelic past. Since then, Goss has forged strong links with Homme, producing both Kyuss and Queens Of The Stone Age. Masters Of Reality have also continued to make rich-sounding records, as heard on this tune from 2001's *Deep In The Hole* – an album also featuring Homme.

INNLAND
TURBONEGRO
NORGE

4 TURBONEGRO
BACK TO DUNGAREE HIGH

Formed in the late '80s, Norway's Turbonegro operate in that grey area between punk and metal, their sound owing as much to Blue Öyster Cult as to Black Flag, with a dash of political incorrectitude thrown in. Kindred spirits with Queens Of The Stone Age, they toured together in 2003, forming a mutual admiration society. QOTSA's worship of the self-styled death-punks preceded that tour, Homme's men covering this track on the Turbonegro tribute *Alpha Motherfuckers* in 2001.

fatsoJetson
Cruel & Delicious

9 FATSO JETSON
LIGHT YOURSELF ON FIRE

A key figure in the Palm Desert rock scene, Mario Lalli's original band Yawning Man formed in the early '80s and proved to be a marked influence on Josh Homme. Lalli convened Fatson Jetson a decade or so later and the band signed to Greg Ginn's SST label who released their first two albums. The band's heavy duty sound has continued to evolve across a series of impressive albums, including 2002's *Cruel & Delicious*, which was released on Homme's own Rekords Rekords.

10 WELLWATER CONSPIRACY
LADDER TO THE MOON

Formed in Seattle in 1993, the original Wellwater Conspiracy line-up featured ex-Monster Magnet guitarist John McBain and Soundgarden duo Matt Cameron (drums) and Ben Shepherd (bass). The latter left prior to the recording of the band's 1999 album, *Brotherhood Of The Electric: Operational Directives*. The album itself delivered on the Conspiracy's original psychedelic intent, as Ladder To The Moon – with Homme on vocals – demonstrates.

11 MOJAVE LORDS
SWEET LITTLE DOWN & OUT

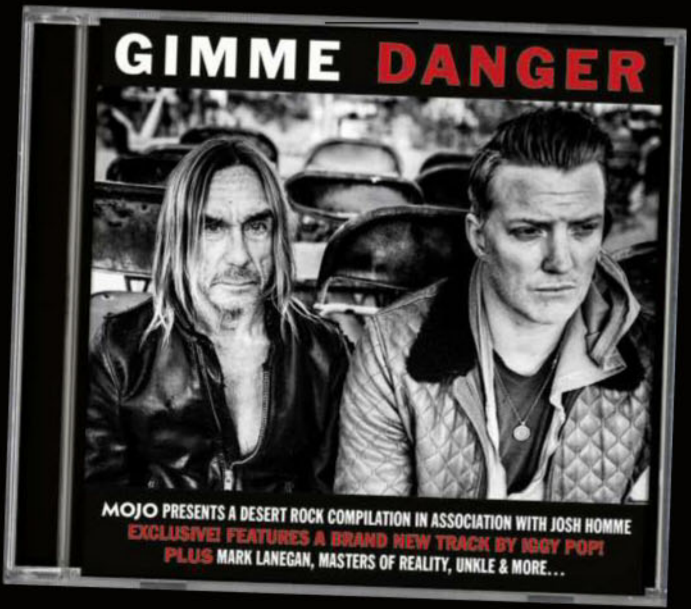
Formed by Rancho linchpin Dave Catching (also in the Eagles Of Death Metal) and his fellow studio-wiz neighbour Bingo Richey, the Mojave Lords have just released their debut album. It's title, *Unfuckwithable*, probably tells you all you need to know about the band. Featuring a selection of fellow travellers like Chris Goss, Barrett Martin (ex-Screaming Trees) and Joey Castillo (QOTSA), the album packs in thick-set riffs with a set of off-kilter melodies, as evidenced on this, the opening track.

12 HELLO=FIRE
FAR FROM IT

Dean Fertita is a musically well-travelled man. A member of Detroit powerpop outfit The Waxwings in the late '90s, he then teamed up with Brendan Benson before joining him and Jack White in The Raconteurs. In 2007 he became a member of QOTSA, cutting his own album under the name of Hello=Fire two years later, by which point he was also playing with The Dead Weather. This track – co-written with Benson – showcases his keen understanding of melody and twisted pop sensibilities.

Andreas Neumann (3), spiritofmetal.com

IGGY POP HAS ALWAYS BEEN A MAN IN SEARCH OF NEW sounds. His quest led him to seek out Queens Of The Stone Age mainman Josh Homme, who in turn brought Iggy to Rancho De La Luna. The focal point for a distinct community of musicians, the studio has been a creative hotbed of modern rock music for over two decades. This bespoke MOJO compilation reflects the work of that amalgam of players and has been assembled in association with Josh himself. MOJO sent an original list of tracks to Josh who added his own suggestions and kindly contributed a series of tunes from the long-deleted Desert Sessions. The result is *Gimme Danger*, a fitting title culled from the track of the same name which appeared on Iggy & The Stooges 1973 album, *Raw Power*. We're proud to say that it starts with a fine track taken from Iggy's latest musical adventure…


GIMME DANGER
MOJO PRESENTS A DESERT ROCK COMPILATION IN ASSOCIATION WITH JOSH HOMME
EXCLUSIVE! FEATURES A BRAND NEW TRACK BY IGGY POP!
PLUS MARK LANEGAN, MASTERS OF REALITY, UNKLE & MORE…

5 UNKLE
RESTLESS (FEAT. JOSH HOMME)

Mo' Wax founder James Lavelle helped redefine UK dance music in the '90s by drawing on a vast range of influences – the records he made as Unkle have seen him work with everyone from Thom Yorke to Metallica's Jason Newsted. His links with Homme stem back to the early 2000s, and Lavelle has also worked with Mark Lanegan and Chris Goss. This 2009 Homme collaboration, a fusion of dancefloor-friendly grooves, climaxes with interlocking guitars.

Desert Sessions 9
I See You Hearin' Me

6 DESERT SESSIONS
I WANNA MAKE IT WIT CHU

The Desert Sessions are a series of releases featuring Homme's many friends and associates, all gathering at different times at Rancho De La Luna to simply jam and make music. The loose-limbed, sensual I Wanna Make It Wit Chu emerged in 2003 and features P.J. Harvey on backing vocals. Four years later the track itself was revisited by Homme on Queens Of The Stone Age's fifth album, *Era Vulgaris*, and was released as the third single from that album.

7 THE TWILIGHT SINGERS
WAVES

Originally a side-project by Afghan Whigs frontman Greg Dulli in the late '90s, The Twilight Singers later came into their own as a collective of musicians that also featured Mark Lanegan. Dulli and Lanegan released records as The Gutter Twins, while Greg has become part of the Rancho De La Luna family. With The Twilight Singers he continues to make music thick with atmosphere and full of deep grooves. Waves is a fine example of that.

The Desert Sessions
Vol IV/Hard Walls And Little Trips

8 DESERT SESSIONS
ECCENTRIC MAN

Tony 'TS' McPhee's outfit The Groundhogs have had a huge influence on US alternative rock thanks to their tough sounding, blues-rooted, hard rock. Originally on 1970's *Thank Christ For The Bomb*, outsider ode Eccentric Man is full of interlaced guitars and post-beat lyrics, presaging Josh Homme's own approach. This late-'90s version is a faithful reboot of the track which has a slightly maniacal edge courtesy of vocals by Mario Lalli of Fatso Jetson.

13 EARTHLINGS?
SAVING UP FOR MY SPACESHIP/ILLUMINATE

Formed by Dave Catching, Fred Drake and singer Pete Stahl (of Scream, Wool and Goatsnake fame), in 1998 earthlings? released their self-titled debut album featuring this signature tune which illustrates their unique brand of hard rock and cosmic jams. Since that first outing the band have continued to record sporadically, their rare live shows adding to their legend. earthlings? have just released their third album, *Mudda Fudda*, in limited vinyl form via Last Hurrah records.

DESERT SESSIONS
7
GYPSY MARCHES

14 DESERT SESSIONS
DON'T DRINK POISON

If ever proof was needed that Josh Homme possesses a different sense of melody from the rest of the world, then Don't Drink Poison could be it. Taken from 2001 The Desert Sessions' *Volume 7* - fittingly subtitled *Gypsy Marches* – this track sounds like a gonzoid mariachi rock waltz, its menacing vocal harmonies underpinned by military rhythms overlain with Brendon McNichol's crazed balaika. Makes you wonder when the man will produce a full soundtrack.

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SONY MUSIC

LEGACY

ALL BACK TO MY PLACE

IN WHICH THE STARS REVEAL THE SONIC DELIGHTS GUARANTEED TO GET THEM GOING...

David Holmes

FILM-MINDED MULTI-TASKER

What music are you currently grooving to?

The new **Cat's Eyes** record, *Treasure House*, is pretty great. Also, Burning Bridges by **Wire** is a beautiful thing, Deep Temple by **Sun Araw** is a psychedelic masterpiece, and **Andrew Weatherall**'s *Convenanza* – he's a wordsmith and a great writer.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

There's a few, all obvious but honest choices – *The Velvet Underground And Nico*, *Pet Sounds*, *Astral Weeks*, *The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars*…

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

I inherited all of my early music from by mother and older brothers and sisters, but the first record I can remember buying was She's So Modern by **The Boomtown Rats**.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

Brian Eno! His career always seemed very desirable – from **Roxy Music** to ambient pioneer, **Bowie**'s Berlin period through **Talking Heads**… he was so mysterious and could take public transport with most people not knowing who he was. Result!

What do you sing in the shower?

Be-Bop-A-Lula by **Gene Vincent** and You Really Got Me by **The Kinks**.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

1950s rock'n'roll, classic Northern soul and gospel always make an appearance after a few too many gins.

And your Sunday morning record?

Roy Montgomery's *Scenes From The South Island*. I've had this record for nearly 20 years, it never fails me. Also, Observatory Crest by **Seventeen Evergreen** – a brilliant cover of the **Captain Beefheart** classic – and My Hawaiian Home by **Bobby Brown** is a favourite… total psyched-out bliss.

David Holmes's new band Unloved's album Guilty Of Love is out on March 4 on Unloved Records.

Ray Mears

BUSHCRAFTER AND SURVIVALIST

What music are you currently grooving to?

I'm writing, so it's all old stuff – **The Kinks**, the **Stones**, **Woody Guthrie**, **The Dubliners**, sea shanties. And a lot of **Bowie**, obviously. *Ziggy Stardust* is my favourite.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Alchemy by **Dire Straits** is brilliant. It was the first thing I had to play on a Sony Walkman, Romeo And Juliet, just amazing! I used to climb in the Alps with that playing, taking very short steps, high up, across the glaciers – wonderful. In the valleys I used to like **Pachelbel**'s Kanon Und Gigue, because to wake up to that in the morning in the summer in the Alps, it's just like being in heaven. One year I did a lot of cross-country skiing and played the music from Top Gun. I associate music with these things.

What was the first record you bought ever? And where did you buy it?

I got a 45 of A Hard Day's Night, maybe in Croydon. And I remember buying **Slade**'s Cum On Feel The Noize too, and playing it on the gram-o-phone… Slade are an urban phenomenon.

Which musician have you ever wanted to be?

None! I'm not a musician. I don't even play air guitar.

What do you sing in the shower?

I don't really. I'll hum what I've been listening to, which has been Seven Drunken Nights by The Dubliners, recently.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

I haven't got one, really. Saturday nights are quiet nights in. I like driving at night so I'll play **Nina Simone** or **Dave Brubeck**'s *Take Five* – I can think deeply. And I like to watch movies, so film soundtracks, too – Zulu, A Bridge Too Far, brilliant! '60s movies were great. I've got war movie music in my (Land Rover) Defender, it really fits.

And your Sunday morning record?

Something classical. Maybe **Haydn**. I'm away a lot at weekends but if I'm home, I'll do as little as possible.

Ray Mears' Tales Of Endurance tour runs from March 1 to April 4

ScopeFeatures, Getty Images

NOW PLAYING

- ● Driving up the middle of the road on Sunday, David Holmes digs My Hawaiian Home, off Bobby Brown's 1972 LP *The Enlightening Beam Of Axonda*.
- ● Ray Mears' Saturday nights are spent driving around in his Land Rover digging John Barry's 1964 Zulu soundtrack.
- ● Linda Gail Lewis still has time for her 45 of Wanda Jackson's 1960 hit Let's Have A Party.

Linda Gail Lewis

THE KILLER'S SISTER!

What music are you currently grooving to?

Some **Elvis**, **The Happy Goodman Family**, **Mickey Gilley**, **Otis Redding**, **John Fogerty**. I love my iPhone – I always have my music with me.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

I never tire of hearing **Jerry Lee Lewis**'s *Sings The Country Music Hall Of Fame Vol 1* and *2*, for his wonderful vocals and amazing piano playing. He makes every one of these great old classic country songs his own. [And] The piano, the Mozart trills and licks, only a genius could make them work.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

I had a small record player that played 45s – I don't remember what I bought first, but I had What'd I Say by **Ray Charles**, I Waited Too Long, **LaVern Baker**, and a couple of **Wanda Jackson** singles, Mean, Mean Man and Let's Have A Party. They're in my memory forever.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

I would love to be my brother. I watched him do shows for most of my life, in beer joints, theatres, county fairs, and fancy night clubs, and I'm still amazed at what he can do.

What do you sing in the shower?

A lot of gospel. The song I sing the most is Fill My Way Everyday With Love. I love this song.

What is your favourite Saturday night record??

[Jerry Lee's] Rockin' My Life Away. Saturday nights are meant for rockin'. And *Live At The Star-Club, Hamburg* after.

And your Sunday morning record?

Sunday morning is time for gospel. My brother's studio gospel and the live church recordings [*Old Time Religion – Rare Recordings Of Jerry Lee Lewis In Church Preachin', Shoutin', and Singin'*, Bear Family]. Also *Southern Gospel*, my album recorded in Sweden with my daughter **Annie Marie**.

Linda Gail's Hard Rockin' Woman is out now on Lanark Records

MOJO

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LAST MONTH'S COVER STORY WAS created in the space of 48 hours following the unexpected passing of David Bowie. The celebration of his life replaced the story you will find included in this edition, along with the accompanying CD. Bowie was, of course, central to the career of Iggy Pop, but this month the man embarks on a new chapter in his musical development in the company of Josh Homme, Dean Fertita and Matt Helders. As Break Into Your Heart, the lead track on our CD proves, Iggy is armed with fresh impetus. It is great to hear and, during what has been a period of great sadness, it makes you realise that music is truly the ultimate celebration of life, in all its phases. That is why, as Frank Zappa once remarked, music is the best. And, as you know, it will forever be that way…

PHIL ALEXANDER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The vision that thou dost see

The thought of a Bowie-less world is too absurd, too tragic and as near as unfathomable a thought as I'm ever likely to have. Ground control gave us no warning, no commencing countdown, no nothing, we went to bed secure of our tomorrows and woke up to an empty house.

Men like David Bowie aren't supposed to die. Ever. Men like Bowie? Nah. David Bowie was one of a kind, much like Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix, Bonzo, Lemmy and a few others that I'm no doubt forgetting as the reality of the day takes hold, as I hear the world carry on a few yards from my window, as I wipe whatever is left of my tears on the sleeve of my robe.

For a man known for changing at the speed of a chameleon, he offered great stability to millions: my father, my mother and my best friend (all rolled into one) from another world. His impact on the arts is unquestionable, his impact on his fans, perhaps greater. Bowie was there before any of us, and Bowie will be there long after any of us have left this mortal coil, but you have known that since forever. Forever, huh? Forever. Forever, little wonder, you little wonder, little wonder us. David Bowie fell to Earth a long time ago, on Sunday night, he went home. "Look up here, I'm in heaven." David Says. Where else would you be, sweet prince ?

Alfredo Huete, Napa, CA, USA

…is my vision's greatest enemy

Starman, hero, genius? He certainly captured the *Zeitgeist* a number of times through his remarkable ability for reinvention. What got him there, what is unique is his use of sound and vision, and especially the vision. The difficulty with the word 'genius' is that his music is surprisingly lightweight and undemanding despite the quality of his collaborators: listen to *"Heroes"* a couple of times, even the serious side two, and you know it all, nothing more is revealed. I bought *"Heroes"* and Eno's *Before And After Science* when they came out, and I still enjoy Eno's but moved Bowie's on fairly swiftly. Starman, hero, genius? Maybe, but not in the musical sense; musical magpie instead.

PS: Despite recent pleas from Man fans, never *ever* write an article on Man, as no Man fan wants to be reminded of the painful story of a band that almost made it but never did. We already do it in private, reading Deke Leonard's books. By all means write about the musicians, especially wonderful drummer Terry Williams, but leave it at that.

Jonathan Monnickendam, via e-mail

Some are born to sweet delight

MOJO 268 was, in its entirety, a glorious work of art! David Bowie would have been suitably chuffed. Many thanks and kindest regards.

George Dimoudis, Central Coast, Australia

Some are born to endless night

Thanks for the excellent article on Neil Young's 'Ditch Trilogy' in MOJO 267. It was a concise and well-written account of Young's career at that time. For Young's career to fall off and fall apart from the mainstream music scene is completely logical. He went from the highs of making gorgeous music while playing with Buffalo Springfield to the lows of enabling lethal drug abuse with Crazy Horse. 'Twas a rocky period that would have torn anyone apart, except that Young showed the strength to carry on. If anyone doubts this, listen to the end of Last Dance on *Time Fades Away*. Just when the song sounds like it's dissolving into chaos Young addresses the fatality, singing "No!", which he repeats no less than 18 times. It throws a spotlight on an artist's resilience. We can learn about growth and strength from this article's portrait of an artist as a Young man.

Vin Maganzini, WMFO Tufts University DJ, Massachusetts, USA

Stupid white man

Nice article on Long John Baldry in MOJO 268. Just a wee correction, albeit to Ian McLagan's posthumous contribution: the three buxom Velvettes were not West Indians, but Hazel Futa, Patience Gcwaby and Eunice Mamsie Mthombeni, who had come to England to tour King Kong, a musical from South Africa, and stayed on after its completion, presumably preferring to remain rather than return to the apartheid at home. Also, not to be confused with The Velvelettes of Motown fame, which I initially did a few years back when working on a project celebrating Eel Pie Island's musical heritage. Incidentally, YouTube "Cyril Davies" and you can see footage of Davies, Baldry and The Velvettes doing Got My Mojo Workin' and CC Rider.

Pete Watt, via e-mail

Wouldn't trust no words written down on no piece of paper

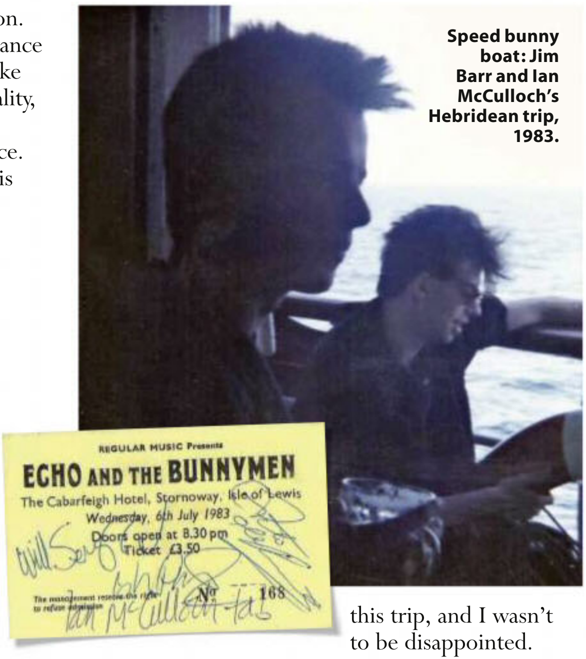
I have read MOJO every month since the beginning. I still have MOJO 2, with the John Lee Hooker cover (but not the Dylan/Lennon MOJO 1, unfortunately) and most since. I tend to cherry pick the stuff that grabs me like Neil Young and Punk in MOJO 267 but I'm not drawn by some of the new things. This could be age, of course, but it could also be your rather egalitarian scoring system for reviews. In MOJO 267 all reviews were four or three stars. This makes spotting the goodies very hard. Could you possibly expand your scoring to give a broader spread; 10 stars or half-star? It would make finding new stuff worth checking a bit easier.

Paul Loosey, via e-mail

Looks like a goddamn religious icon!

As a recent subscriber to your magazine, I was delighted to see the inclusion of the article on Echo And The Bunnymen's tour of the Northern Hemisphere in summer '83 (MOJO 267), a trip I embarked upon, along with my brother, as a fresh-faced 19-year-old. They had previously toured the Highlands the year before, and that time I was lucky enough to catch them play an intimate gig in Aviemore, of all places; just the four of them and Ian Broudie. So there was no way I was going to miss this trip, and I wasn't to be disappointed. From the soundcheck in Portree being held up for a church sermon, to drinking lots of whisky on little buses along with the small London media posse that was following them around, it was wonderful. The beautiful weather and scenery were an added bonus, and the gigs were out of this world, and, like Will Sergeant, I will certainly remember them forever.

Jim Barr, Wolverhampton.



Speed bunny boat: Jim Barr and Ian McCulloch's Hebridean trip, 1983.

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Jim Barr (2)

Why are you helping me?

Re Pat Gilbert's article on Echo And The Bunnymen playing the Royal Albert Hall in 1983 (MOJO 267). Indeed, Mott The Hoople played the RAH on July 8, 1971 and some seats got broken but rock bands played there later in the year: Traffic; Creedence Clearwater Revival; Deep Purple; Canned Heat etc. In 1972 Black Sabbath and Jethro Tull appeared there, so perhaps Ian McCulloch and Bill Drummond had forgotten this. A book about rock gigs at the RAH would be useful; I would be happy to share my findings.

Richard Lysons, via e-mai

It is strange you do not remember your poetry

I just finished listening to the latest Bob Dylan bootleg, which projected me back to 1985's *Biograph*. No one should ever second-guess Bob, but Abandoned Love really spoke to me, a superior Dylan song: Bob on vocals, guitar, harmonica, Howie Wyeth on drums, Scarlett Rivera on violin and Rob Stoner on bass. The song is a beautiful lyrical statement of fading love, made perfect by Rob Stoner's high lonesome bluegrass harmony. How did it not make it onto *Desire*?

Terry Truman, Centennial, Colorado, USA

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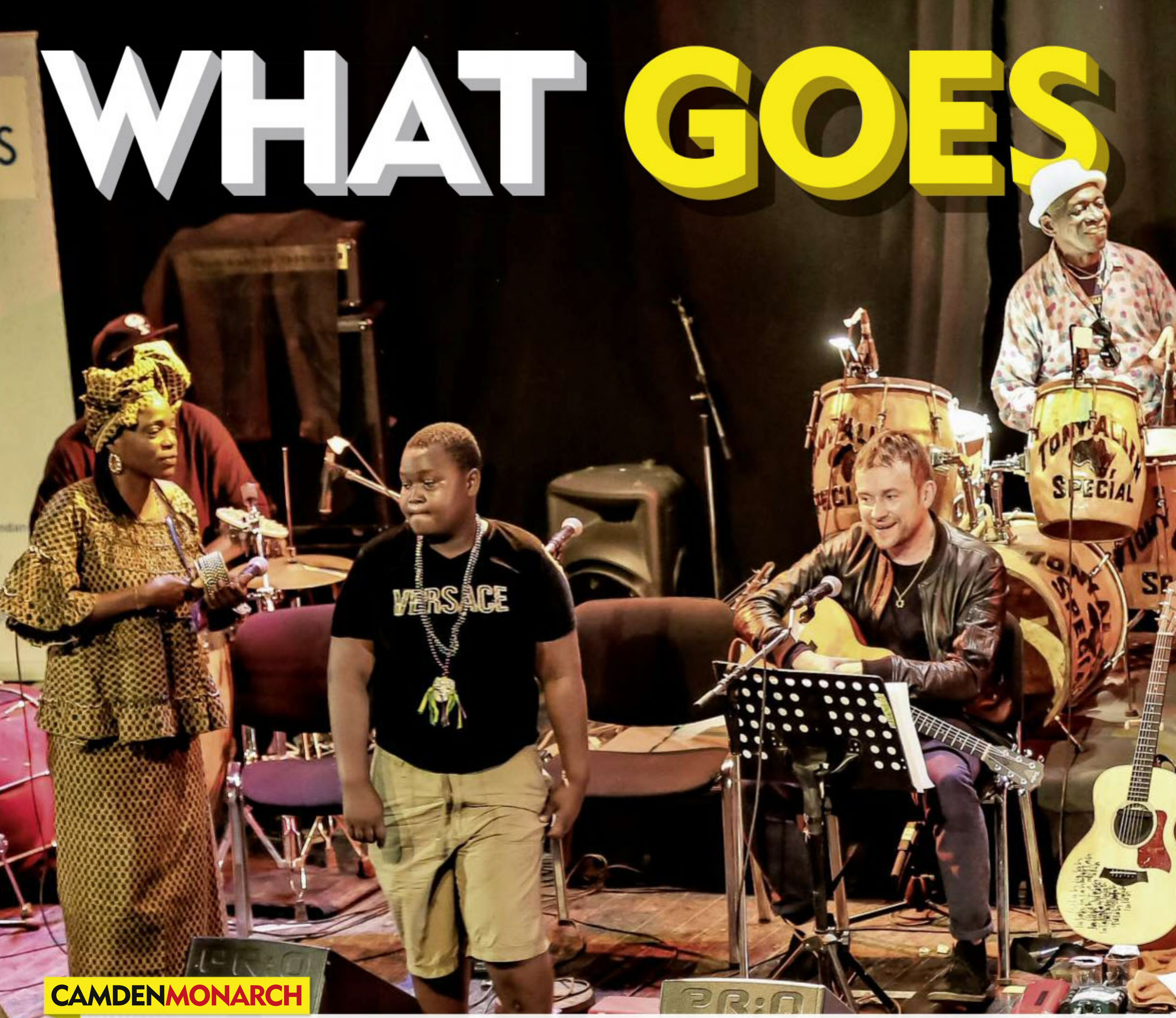

CAMDENMONARCH

THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE KING

Playing at Toumani Diabaté's Festival Acoustik Bamako, Damon Albarn *becomes an honorary royal?*

At the Institut Français, Bamako, Mali, January 29, 2016 (from left) (obscured) Remi Kabaka, Kokanko Sata and her son, Damon Albarn, Tony Allen, Toumani Diabaté, Gbatokai Dakinah, Arngeir Hauksson, William Lyons and Mike Smith; (insets, below right) Albarn honoured at the village of Kirina.

Damon Albarn's picking up an OBE in March. But before that, on January 31, he was granted the status of a local king in Mali and has a new name, Makandjan Kamissoko. It's quite some honour, and was made by the country's leading griots, hereditary musicians who are the guardians of Mali's ancient history and songs. Griots don't forget, and they had taken note of Albarn's commitment to the country, coming back here at a time when the Foreign Office advise against "all but essential" travel, after the terrorist attack on a luxury Bamako hotel in November, in which 20 people were killed.

Just five years ago, Mali was a tourist destination famous for its music festivals. But the continuing battle against Islamist extremists has changed all that. The music festivals have either been cancelled or cut right back, and tourism has collapsed. So now Toumani Diabaté's new event, the four-day Festival Acoustik Bamako, aimed to start a fight-back. Albarn said he was here because of the importance of, "actively participating in a festival in a place that in some ways has become a no-go zone for Western artists, let alone tourists… if we don't give them that revenue through tourism, and keep a conversation going, things could get really horrendous here. Things can just stop and never come back to life." He was first here 15 years ago, he says, and "spent every night in small bars and music venues, of which there are none now. These streams have dried up. This culture needs water."

He received his honour in the little village of Kirina, 25 miles south of Bamako, where there's no running water or electricity, but there is a music school for griot children. He was greeted by griots playing drums and traditional instruments, and by dancers, some wearing masks. An imam led the prayers and Albarn was shown a classroom named in his honour. "My heart is here," he said, pledging to give a gift to the school "every year for the rest of my life."

Toumani Diabaté, kora genius and surely Mali's best-known griot, told him "you're in Mali at a very critical moment of our history, and you've come here to play for nothing. As we say, 'You know your best friend when you've got a problem.'" Armed gendarmes guarding the event were a reminder that Mali's main problem right now is security, yet Albarn pointed out that he'd brought his mum and daughter on the trip. He had been persuaded to

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CULTURE EN PARTAGE

stay in a well-guarded hotel ("like a very pleasant open prison") but had been out in the market, where, he says, there was "no aggression, no visible sense of danger at all".

But there's still a State of Emergency, and there were heavily armed gendarmes outside the new Conservatoire Des Arts, where several concerts were held. Malian artists included Toumani and Songhoy Blues; among the visitors were Tony Allen, South African guitarist Derek Gripper, and Albarn, who gave by far the most experimental performance of the festival. Backed by Western musicians playing violin, cello, the ancient theorbo lute and sackbut, with Malians adding vocals, kora and balafon, he revived songs from his albums *Mali Music* and *Dr Dee*, along with songs from Gorillaz and his solo LP. Albarn said afterwards that it was "one of the best gigs I've ever done… it went a lot better than my last gig in Africa, at the Shrine [in Lagos] where we had bottles thrown at us."

Albarn "likes doing lots of different things", and next comes a project with the Syrian National Orchestra of Arabic Music, which is "part of the same thing… I'm trying to help, but also learning." But first, the OBE. "It's something I think you should accept graciously regardless of your politics," he says. "It's a very nice thing to happen, but it doesn't make you a better musician. But I'm having terrible problems with my family as to what to wear. Certain members of the family are not willing to go with the dress code at the moment…"

Robin Denselow

> **"YOU KNOW YOUR BEST FRIEND WHEN YOU'VE GOT A PROBLEM."**
> **Toumani Diabaté**

Mathieu Gateiller/STUDIO WANE, Robin Denselow (2)

SKA ISSUE

THEN THERE WERE THREE

Despite drummer Brad's death, The Specials will go on. Frontman Terry Hall explains why.

Rude reawakening: (above) Terry Hall (left) on-stage with Lynval Golding at the Roundhouse, Camden Town, November 13, 2014; (below) The Specials (from left) Hall, Golding, Horace Panter and the late John Bradbury.

"We're still in that stage of coming to terms with everything," says Specials voice Terry Hall this late January afternoon. "I was at the football the day Brad died. I texted him saying, 'What a shit game, I'll call you tomorrow.' And then I got the call when I got home. I couldn't put two and two together."

When Specials drummer John Bradbury died suddenly on December 28, it seemed likely the group, who reformed in 2008, would cease. But as Hall makes clear, the three remaining members of the original line-up – Terry, guitarist Lynval Golding and bass player Horace Panter – will honour dates in October and November that were booked before Bradbury's passing.

"We thought long and hard about it, and honestly, beyond these dates we haven't got a clue," says Hall. "But when Lynval, who lives in Seattle, came over, as soon as I saw him, we just knew we wanted to do it. And we know that Brad would want us to do it. For us, it'll help us celebrate him, to take him with us in a funny way, and it'll help the people who come to see us, I hope. Some people get that and some people don't. I don't care really. We know where we are with it all."

A new drummer is already in place, he says, barring final confirmation ("we're not looking to make a replacement, because you can't do that really") and Hall is unconcerned that only three original Specials remain. "It doesn't affect it, really," he says. "The three of us still believe in that name, or we wouldn't do it. People come and go, right? Compare it to bands like The Who, who are now a two-piece. Basically, it's what you do – I get on a stage and sing. The thing is, we know that we want to do this, and it's making us feel good about it, it's keeping us strong. It's still a celebration of this thing. You can gauge things from audience reaction if you're doing something good or valid, and we still are."

> **"WE STILL BELIEVE IN THAT NAME, OR WE WOULDN'T DO IT."**
> **Terry Hall**

Poignantly, Terry reveals that after a relatively fallow 2015 the group had reconvened before Christmas in London to discuss new music. "Everybody had started to write stuff, and the idea was to get together and swap ideas," he says. "Brad had his home studio set up and he'd been writing some new material. Obviously, now, I've no idea what's gonna happen with that stuff. We didn't make any commitment to make a record or anything, it was just what we wanted to do."

Would he, MOJO wonders, like to do something with Brad's songs? "Yeah, obviously. 'Cos it's like, people who you trust isn't it? But again," he adds, "it's still too raw. I haven't been able to listen to the stuff he sent over since he died."

He recalls Bradbury's funeral in Coventry on January 11. "It wasn't a closed shop – there were a lot of fans, and Lynval sang Redemption Song with a string quartet. Really lovely. I saw Jerry [Dammers, estranged Specials founder] – it was our eight-and-a half-year meeting. Everybody, obviously, was civil, yeah. That's the weird thing, we were so close as young men, that doesn't really leave you, does it? There is a bond whether you like it or not.

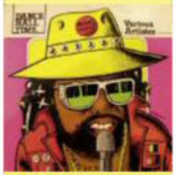
"I had a speech prepared, but when it came to it, it was hard. Me and Brad, we grew up two streets from each other, and he really was like family, especially in the last nine years when we've acted as grown-ups. He felt like a bit of an older brother. I can be a right whingeing twat, but he listened and understood it, and accepted me for what I was."

Ian Harrison

MOJO DIARY

MARCH 4

Michael Head (above), reclusive genius of **Shack** and **The Strands**, brings his **Red Elastic Band** to play a rare date at the Islington Assembly Hall. Support is from **Edgar 'Summertyme' Jones**. Expect new songs and gems from the back catalogue: maybe he can also tell us what happened to the phantom Strands album *The Olde World*, reviewed in MOJO 261 but then mysteriously removed from the release schedules.



MARCH 23

In Fine Style: The Dancehall Art Of **Wilfred Limonious** opens at the South London Gallery, celebrating the work of the '80s reggae sleeve illustrator who drew covers for Frankie Paul, Cocoa Tea and many comps as well as lending his artistry to Jamaican newspaper strips and literacy programmes. This summer his work will also feature in a coffee table tome. See www.onelovebooks.com for info.

MARCH 31

Complicated Game – Inside The Songs Of **XTC** is published by Jawbone. Written by **Andy Partridge** (above) and Todd Bernhardt, the 408-page book promises insight, revelation and anecdotes about the group, pages from songwriting notebooks, original artwork designs and "a guide to Andy Partridge's Swindon", not to mention examples of his "legendary humour".

Getty Images (2), Rex, Mark McNulty

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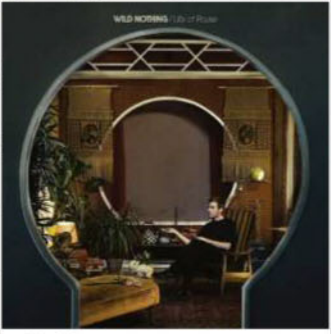
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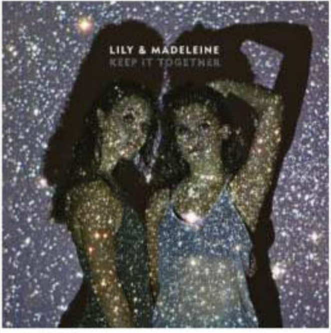
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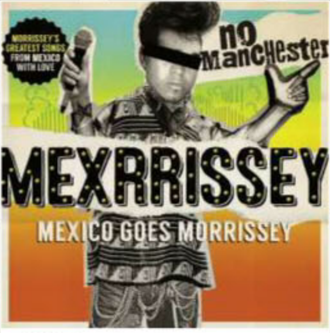
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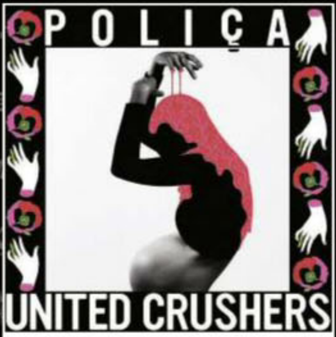
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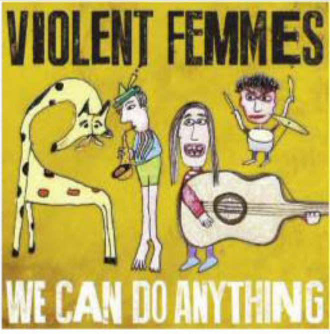
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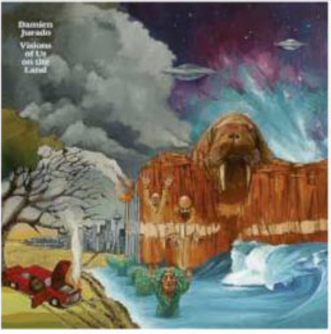
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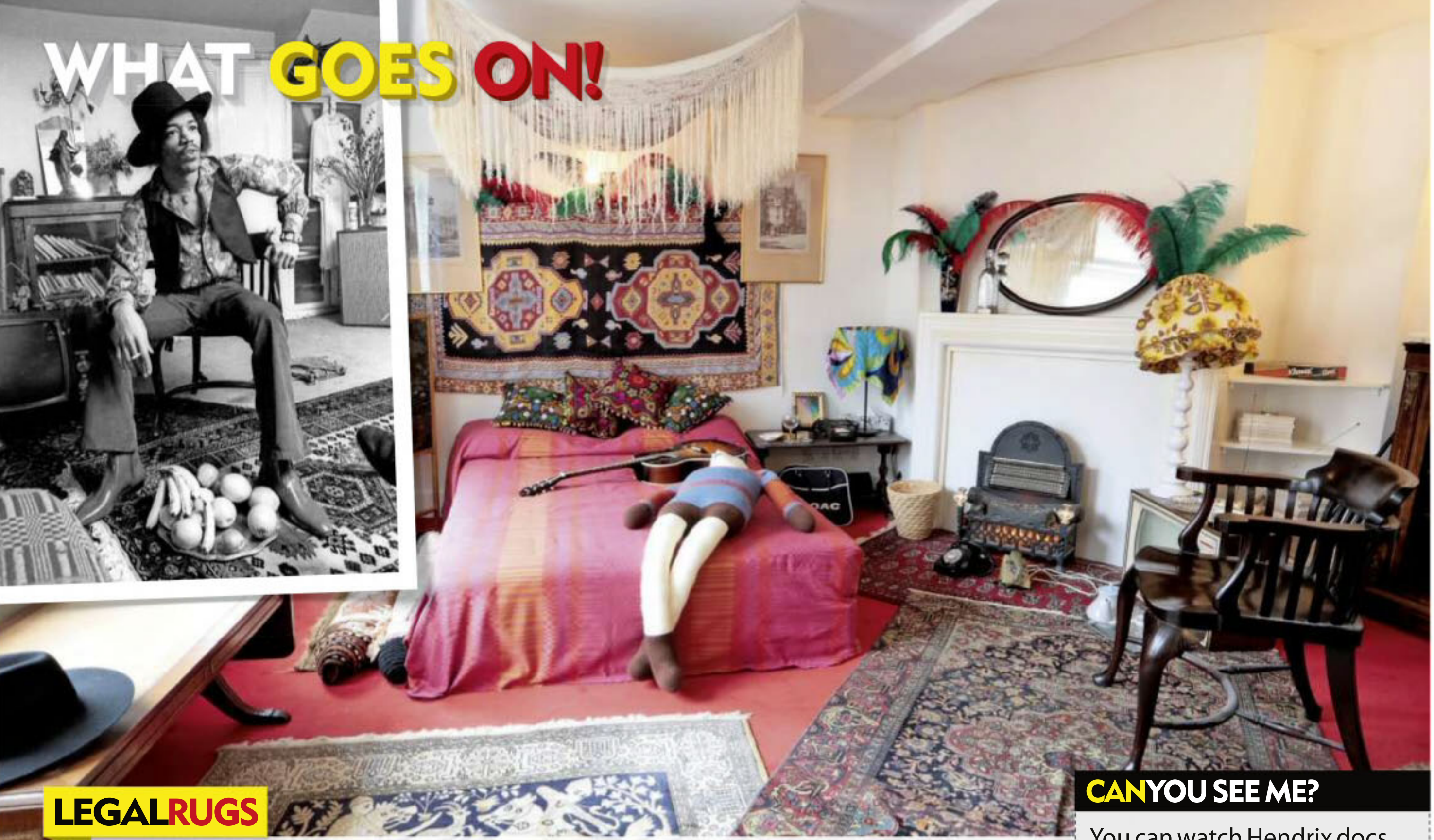


LEGAL RUGS

JIMI'S JOINT

Hendrix's restored Mayfair bolt-hole is now open to the public. MOJO has a poke about.

Upstairs from Mr Love, the hippy-themed cafe-restaurant with its agreeable late licence; across the road from shoe shop Russell & Bromley; and in convenient staggering distance from the Speakeasy and Scotch Of St. James: for three months in 1969, 23 Brook Street was the Mayfair pied-à-terre of James Marshall Hendrix.

As photos and records show – and then-girlfriend Kathy Etchingham remembers it today – it was a busy time. After a whirlwind '68, Hendrix planned to take a year off, but with relations in the Experience crumbling and the guitar genius in a state of creative flux, it didn't play out that way. Meanwhile, fellow artists were up and down the stairs for all-hours jam sessions – Paul McCartney, Roland Kirk, Billy Preston (who broke a whisky decanter) – and the two telephones rang off the hook. "Jimi had one phone for music business, and one for friends," says Etchingham, "but he kept mixing the numbers up."

In 2016, Brook St is much changed (though Russell & Bromley is still there), but stepping into the apartment's recreated bedroom/salon is a mooch back in time. Amid the oriental textiles, visitors find accredited Hendrix memorabilia – the actual mirror that sat on the mantelpiece in '68/69, the Epiphone FT79 acoustic guitar on which he rearranged Dylan's All Along The Watchtower – plus detailed replicas of the chair and the gangly, fan-knitted teddy bear that were here 47 years ago. Other items are of-the-period: from the sci-fi paperbacks Hendrix devoured to the enormous Lowther speakers he would regularly blow. It's eerily tidy for a rock star pit, but even that, says Etchingham, is authentic: "It was Jimi's army training. He made the bed better than I did."

Etchingham had taken on Brook Street in summer 1968, paying £30 a week. Hendrix had recently been evicted from 34 Montagu Square in Marylebone (leaseholder: one R. Starkey) after complaints from the neighbours, and a stint sharing with Hendrix's manager Chas Chandler and wife Lotta in Upper Berkeley Street had ended in ructions. Moving himself into Brook St properly from January 1969, the guitarist was tickled that composer George Frideric Handel had lived next door (at Number 25) and purchased copies of the Messiah and Belshazzar oratorios from HMV in Oxford Street, augmenting discs by Dylan, Cream, The Beatles, Wes Montgomery, Chris Barber, even Acker Bilk in the Brook St record collection. "One day Jimi was looking in the bathroom mirror and he swore he saw Handel's silhouette," recalls Etchingham. "Mind you, he *had* been smoking."

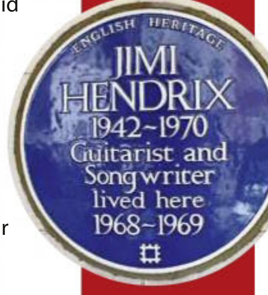
While aspects of life at Brook St reek of authentic '60s pop glamour (Etchingham remembers being escorted home from the bank one day carrying £4,000 in cash), the impression left on the modern visitor is of ordinary domestic bliss: a bottle of Mateus Rosé from Mr Love, Coronation Street on the box, a game of Monopoly on the go. "He described it as his first real home," says Etchingham. Sadly, it was also destined to be his last.

Danny Eccleston

Hendrix's flat is now open to visitors. For tickets and opening times head to handelhendrix.org.

Brook Street no argument: (above) Jimi Hendrix's restored '69 pad, with knitted teddy bear on the bed; (inset) the artist in situ enjoying a B&H; (below) the exterior, and his blue plaque.

> "STEPPING INTO THE APARTMENT'S RECREATED BEDROOM/SALON IS A MOOCH BACK IN TIME."



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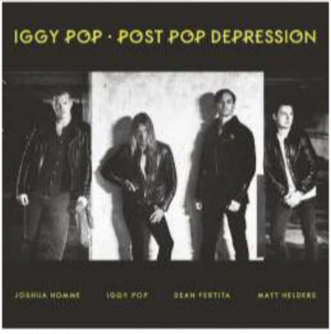
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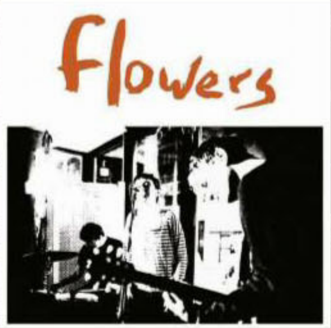

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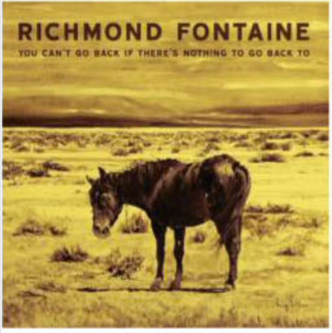
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WHAT GOES ON!

On a Tubeway journey: Gary Numan reveals himself in his Los Angeles home studio, tea to hand.

MOJOWORKING

GARY NUMAN

Sharing every step of the way online, the pioneering electronic rocker works on album 21. "I don't think I've thought it through," he says.

Sat on a hotel balcony overlooking a Californian freeway, Gary Numan listens to the sound of cars. "Normally when I'm making an album I'll be recording hundreds of noises and background ambiences like this," he tells MOJO. "I enjoy the pre-planning and starting with a number of ideas. This time, I haven't done any of that."

The reason being that he has funded his next album via the PledgeMusic website, and the perks of pre-ordering include regular in-studio film updates on how recording is progressing. "I wanted to have an absolutely blank canvas, before I started," he explains. "The whole point of it is to invite fans in and let them see it from beginning to end."

In November 2015, he retired to the windowless, soundproofed studio in a converted guesthouse "a few yards" outside his Los Angeles home, working around family commitments. Has the approach yielded any advantages? "None that I can see, to be really truthful," he says. "I don't think I've thought it through properly. When you're working on a song you come up with dozens of ideas, some of them will sound pretty good in the morning, but by the afternoon they're sounding pretty shit and you'll dump them. Doing these updates, you're playing people these things you'd normally hide, and everybody has an opinion about them. You think, This isn't it, don't start criticising, fuck off! But how can you show the process if you don't explain why that track evolved into something else?"

It's too early, he says, to discuss the nine or 10 pieces he's working on in detail. Rather than his usual habit of writing on piano, he says he's been starting with string motifs, bass grooves and low-end frequencies, and writing melodies to go with them. "I still want it to be heavy, dark and very electronic," he goes on. "I'm very happy in that space and there's a fantastic variety you can bring to it. The last one [*Splinter (Songs From A Broken Mind)*] was about how I'd had years of depression, and being diagnosed and cured of that.

"The three years since I've moved to America have been very turbulent, with a lot of stuff that was very difficult to get through. I imagine that the majority of the new album will be looking at that. Everything I write is genuinely about my own life… and I tend to not write about anything that's happy or enjoyable! Ha ha!"

> "I TEND TO NOT WRITE ABOUT ANYTHING THAT'S HAPPY OR ENJOYABLE! HA HA!"

He confirms that Brum producer Ade Fenton, who worked on his last three albums, won't be involved this time, though the singer doesn't rule out bringing in help from Los Angeles musician friends. Like *Splinter*, some songs may be based on a novel he's writing. "I'm trying to start with an epic," he says. "It's not about aliens or space ships, it's all swords, magic and demons, all that nonsense.

"I'm under pressure in my own head," concludes Numan, who is currently managing himself and is also juggling collaborative work with John Foxx, The Duke Spirit and Mexican group Titán. "Doing this has been far more unusual than I'd been expecting, far more. But one of the problems I've had in the past is getting into routines, and it's good to break out of that."

Ian Harrison

FACT SHEET

Title: *A Mountain To Climb* (working title)

Due: October ("or it might go back to January 2017").

Producer: Gary Numan, TBC

Titles: TBC

The Buzz: "It's got to be a very good record, because I did a lot of good with the last album and I'd be horrified if I undid that. I'm hoping that being made to go about it differently, and involving fans from literally the very beginning up to the very end, will create something different to what I would have done otherwise. And I'm genuine about it, because I've promised to do it."

ALSOWORKING

…**RUTS DC** are recording new album *Psychic Attack*. Says **Dave Ruffy**, "We're taking as much care as we ever have!" …**GIORGIO MORODER**, has announced he'll be working on **Lady Gaga**'s (below) impending fourth solo album. Other contributors may include Paul McCartney and Nile Rodgers … **DAVE GAHAN** tells MOJO that he and **Martin Gore** have been discussing a new **Depeche Mode** LP. Both men were devastated by the death of Bowie, he says. "Martin was really shaken up. He doesn't show a lot of emotion that way, but he told me that he couldn't sleep all night. So I said to him, we need to just write something, we need to express that, and he was like, 'You're right'. It's that English thing, you hold back your emotions but when somebody opens the door and says, 'We should say something', you go, Yeah, of course we should" … **THURSTON MOORE**'s' (right) new album *Rock'n'Roll Consciousness*, produced by **Paul Epworth**, awaits a release date… **MALCOLM MIDDLETON**'s new solo album *Summer Of '13* arrives in May. Written and recorded in an old clocktower in Fife over the past three years, Middleton says, "It was sounding negative and depressing, so I scrapped most of the songs in 2013 and started again. It's upbeat music, for the most part, but the lyrics still tend to get a bit heavy." Members of **The Beta Band**, **De Rosa** and **First Aid Kit** help out…

Alamy

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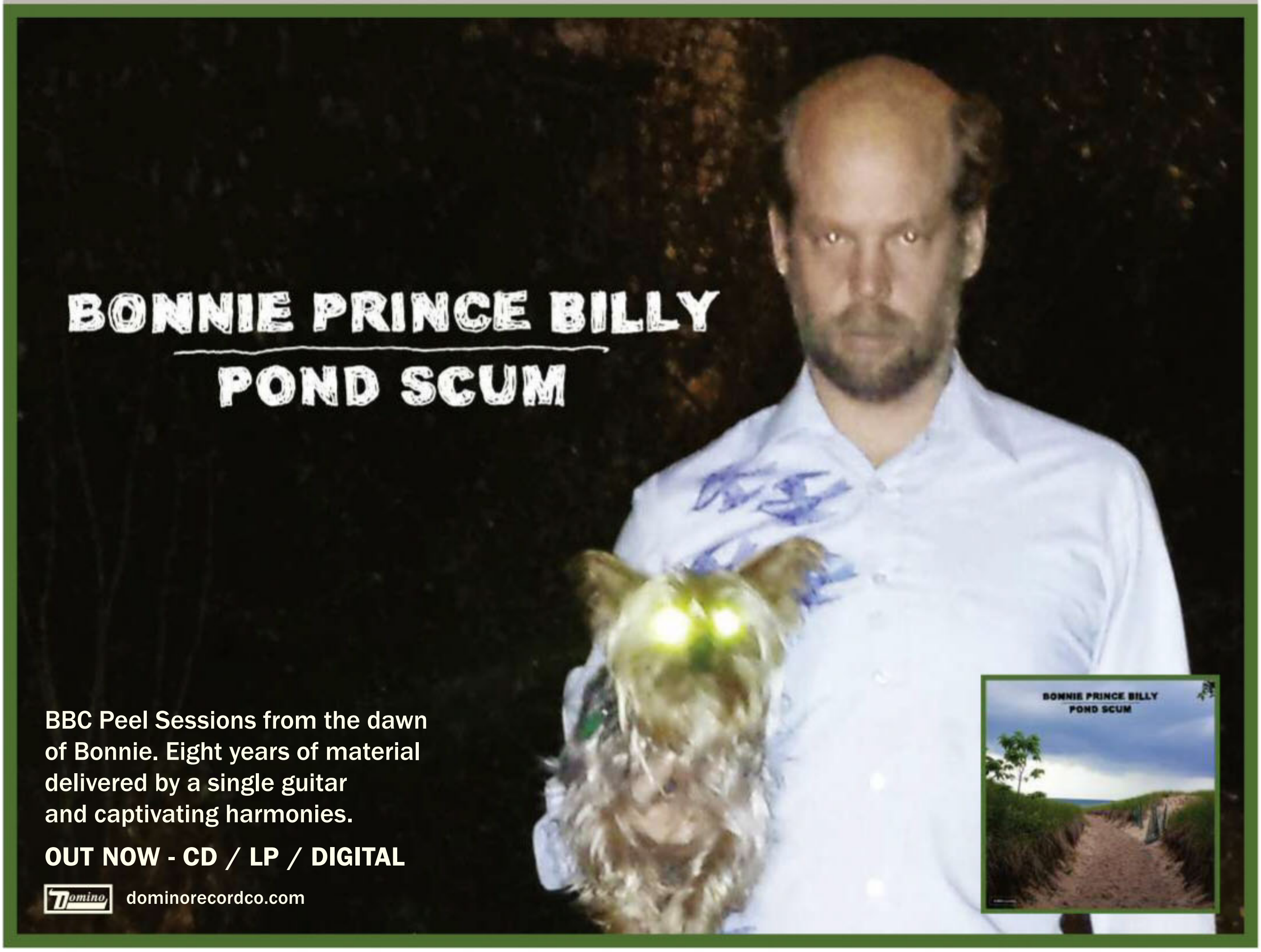
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WHAT GOES ON!

MOJOPLAYLIST

Time for the month's best analogue bloop, Afro-disco and revivified vintage strangeness – can you defend it?

1 UNDERWORLD

I EXHALE

The beat's wearing stack heels, a banjo's being twanged and the blaring hook seems to be blowing in from across the Arctic tundra. But the lead track from Hyde and Smith's new one, *Barbara Barbara, we face a shining future*, is still deeply Underworld: Hyde's psychobabbling makes twisted (non)sense, full of Ballardian urban code as the track powers forwards and upwards. Meanwhile, Hyde – who appears in the song's video raving in a suit – says he thinks the JBO label's Steve Hall deserves thanks, noting, "He knows when to counter our poetry with a bit of football."

Find it: *YouTube*

Two specs-y: Underworld's Hyde (left) and Smith take a sideways look; (below) Laura Mvula.

2 **SHIELDS** FACE TO FACE

Watch out Field Music, north-east youngsters Shields have found the 'Gabriel' button and are using it to make elegant, sophis-to-synth pop. From Feb's *How Can We Fix This* LP on Kaleidoscope.

Find it: *SoundCloud*

3 **EARTH, WIND & FIRE** CAN'T LET GO

In tribute to Maurice White, the second track on *I Am* has all of his bandleading virtues: smooth, pacy locomotion, strong horns, rich harmonies as he links the hits In The Stone and After The Love Has Gone.

Find it: *I Am* (CBS)

4 **METAMONO** THE ACROBATIC FLY

The south London all-analogue electronicists turn their Bakelite dials to 'further' and locate the circuit node where acid house meets the junkyard at 76 Totter's Lane, in frightening novelty pop style. Felt to be "too banging" for new LP *Creative Listening*.

Find it: *tinyurl.com/jumh96e*

5 **LAURA MVULA FT. NILE RODGERS** OVERCOME

Extraordinary, strident Afro-disco anthem from the Brummie soul sensation features Nile Rodgers' bouncing guitar and a video of Mvula laying dead in a gilded cage, before being resurrected by the groove and growing wings. What a song. What a woman.

Find it: *YouTube*

6 **CAT'S EYES** CHAMELEON QUEEN

With ghostly choirs, stately horns and noble chords, Rachel Zeffira and Faris Badwan – who's disinterested yet shattered – tease third Cat's Eyes LP *Treasure House*.

Find it: *YouTube*

7 **CHARLES BRADLEY** CHANGES

Smouldering Sabs-in-soul cover, previously released for RSD and now lead single from his new LP. Check out the video of him silently emoting for six minutes and prepare to weep.

Find it: *YouTube*

ROKSAN MOJO listens to all its music on Roksan equipment

> **"MVULA IS RESURRECTED BY THE GROOVE."**

8 **MASSIVE ATTACK, TRICKY & 3D** TAKE IT THERE

They're together for the first time since 1994's *Protection*, but the territory is altered: Take It There is piano-led and bluesy with grinding guitars and no MCing to speak of, and disturbs like an unexpected rendezvous with the buried past. Hear it on The Ritual Spirit EP.

Find it: *YouTube*

9 **THE ROLLING STONES** SHE'S A RAINBOW

Live in Santiago, Chile on February 3, the Stones play the *Their Satanic Majesties Request* fave for the first time in years. The film's amateur, but this Englyshe-psych effusion retains its charm.

Find it: *YouTube*

10 **LUST FOR YOUTH** STARDOM

Lust For Youth, and indeed a distinct fondness for John Foxx-era Ultravox, judging by the first single from the Copenhagen trio's debut *Compassion* (Sacred Bones). Cue billowing synths, ominous breakdowns and mournful vocals bemoaning technology's yoke.

Find it: *SoundCloud*

11 **NEW ORDER** SINGULARITY (EXTENDED MIX)

The *Music Complete* pick, elongated by the band themselves. Additional space brings alive full-on three-in-the-morning club impact with lasers (in your mind), while keeping one eye on more sinister depths.

Find it: *YouTube*

12 **KATY B X FOUR TET X FLOATING POINTS** CALM DOWN

With electro-movers vying for space on her new LP, this irresistible acid bubble bath with Kieran Hebden and Sam Shepherd is pure class. And is the title Cameron-baiting feminist polemic? Probably.

Find it: *SoundCloud*

13 **PRIMAL SCREAM AND SKY FERREIRA** WHERE THE LIGHT GETS IN

Heralding new album *Chaosmosis*, Bobby Gillespie exposes his inner disco demon, aided by antagonist pop star Ferreira. A blur of synths and finger clicks, this is insurrection you can vogue to.

Find it: *YouTube*

14 **THE RAVEONETTES** THIS WORLD IS EMPTY (WITHOUT YOU)

The Dane duo plan to release a topical song a month in '16. Chiming with new wave synths, their opening salvo was this breathless blast of ice-cold heartbreak.

Find it: *YouTube*

15 **BLIND GUSSIE NESBIT** I'LL JUST STAND AND WRING MY HANDS AND CRY

What ails the '20s 'guitar evangelist'? All the woes that life can heap on a poor man, it seems, as he abstractly strums and murmurs his innermost being to strange internal metres only he knows.

Find it: *YouTube*

16 **JUNGLE BROTHERS** I'LL HOUSE YOU

The best hip house tune ever? And joy of joys, the Get On Down label have reissued it on clear-vinyl 7-inch (for that '88 flava, you can get it with a T-shirt and the *Straight Out The Jungle* LP on double tape).

Find it: *YouTube*

17 **HAWKWIND** THE AUBERGINE THAT ATE RANGOON (THE DEADSTOCK 33S EDIT)

The 'Wind's tripped-out '76 instrumental, dubbed up by DJ Justin Robertson, bringing out its inner Billy Cobham to better evoke that hallucinogenic rickshaw ride backwards through time.

Find it: *SoundCloud*

18 **JAN HAMMER** HAMMER TIME!

An hour-long mix of the composer's jazz-fusion works, collated and curated by Manc-based DJ PP Roy. The keytar wig outs are merciless!

Find it: *tinyurl.com/z3cekf3*

19 **THE THREE DEGREES** LOVE TRAIN

Remaking Gamble & Huff greats, the Degrees shocked us as they sang, "the next stop that we make is Afghanistan…" Whoa! Look out Taliban! "Tell all the folks in 'I-raq' and Syria too," they add.

Find it: *Strategy: Our Tribute To Philadelphia* (CHERRY RED)

20 **REV. UTAH SMITH** TWO WINGS

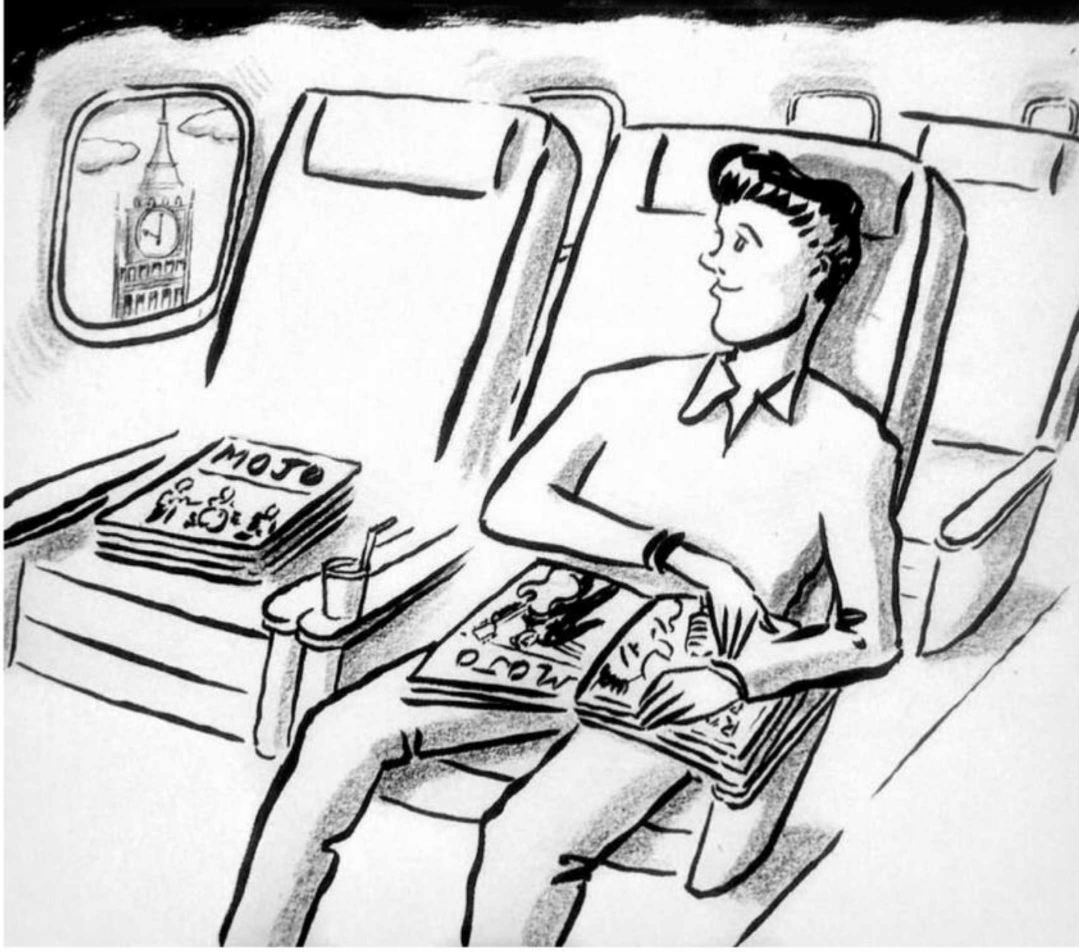
The Louisiana clergyman – who did indeed wear gigantic wings on occasion – on blisteringly raw form in 1953, with electrified guitar, handclaps and hollering galore. Dare Satan disagree?

Find it: *YouTube*

SELFPORTRAIT

CHRIS ISAAK

The retro rocker, thesp and (Australian) X Factor judge, in his own words and by his own hand.



Wicked Game face: Chris Isaak flies into Blighty with improving reading matter; (below) the real thing.

I'd describe myself as… hard working. In some ways I'm practical and in some ways I'm completely not. When I talk to my manager I realise I have a lot of ideas that are completely unrealistic – you know, why don't we bring in a car or an elephant on-stage? I don't know if I'm a sociopath, but there's a part of me that goes, if everyone's going one direction, I'll go the other.

Music changed me by… by giving me a way to talk to other people and sing my emotions. When I'm on-stage I'm outgoing and gregarious but in real life I'm not. I think about what else I would've liked to have done, and I think I would've enjoyed being a criminal. I'm not a tough guy, but part of me goes, the hours are good and you get to plan things, a caper, which is kind of like planning a show.

When I'm not making music I'm… my biggest hobby is cartooning. I like Charles Addams who did The Addams Family. My drawings, there's a mix, everything from Disney cartoons to hardcore pornography, real sexual stuff, embarrassingly in your face and direct, filthy cartoons for filth's sake! To me, sex is pretty funny stuff. My brother told me once, you draw what you want, and I hope that's not the case, because I'd be institutionalised.

My biggest vice is… when I walk past a store that has pencils and pens and art supplies I can't stop myself. I burn through 'em, God yeah.

The last time I was embarrassed was… when I did something that went against my nature. I wouldn't want to cause somebody discomfort with something I said.

My formal qualifications are… I graduated from college, I was a communication arts and English Literature major, and my subject was Victorian English. I read a lot of poems, and as my friends used to say, you'll never get a job. The best qualification I have, though, is I'm really pretty good at roofing – tar roofs, shingle roofs.

"I THINK I WOULD'VE ENJOYED BEING A CRIMINAL."

The last time I cried was… last month. I played a song for someone, and every time I play that song I cry. It's by Amália Rodrigues, a beautiful singer, she's kind of a legend in Portugal, and the song is Coimbra. I dunno why but it brings me back to another place, to somebody I used to know, and boom, out come the tears. Even saying it now just chokes me up.

Vinyl, CD or MP3?… it doesn't make any difference. The song's the thing.

My most treasured possession is… I have things that were my dad's, who's passed away now, and those things mean a lot to me. Some of his tie clips, and a 1960s green suit. My dad was not well-to-do, he was a very working-class guy, and he only had a couple suits and they were second-hand when he bought 'em. I've worn that suit on-stage.

The best book I've read is… The Lazlo Letters by Don Novello. He wrote ridiculous letters to the heads of companies and politicians and they took them seriously and wrote back. Every time I read it I laugh out loud.

Is the glass half-full or half-empty? **…** I can't find the glass. I'm messed up, man!

My greatest regret is… when I was young and fell in love, I think I didn't show my love to the person I was first in love with. That person passed away at a very young age. I did get to see her before she passed away and got to tell her, and she said, "But you were great." There was a moment I stood outside her house and we said goodbye and I knew as I walked away it was the last time we'd meet. I walked down the street, got in my car and just fell apart.

When we die… I want heaven as depicted in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer films. I have high hopes.

I would like to be remembered as… a good guy to work with, and if I was your friend I'd back you up, no questions. I think that's the greatest tribute you know? That you'd be a loyal friend.

Ian Harrison

Chris Isaak's new album First Comes The Night is out now on Rhino.

MONDOMOJO

…she's long talked about it, but finally new **LIZ FRASER** (right) music is out there. With partner **Damon Reece**, she's soundtracked Sky Arts mini-series The Nightmare Worlds Of H.G. Wells, which stars **Ray Winstone**. Will there be shimmering shards?… after he paid $2million for the one-off **WU-TANG CLAN** album *Once Upon A Time In Shaolin*, venture capitalist **Martin Shkreli** has demanded a written apology from **Ghostface Killah** for calling him a "shithead". Otherwise? He'll erase his raps from the LP! "Even though I pity you, I have to give you some punishment," noted Shkreli in a filmed online statement. Eh? … January saw Democrat hopeful **BERNIE SANDERS** singing This Land Is Your Land with **Vampire Weekend** and **Dirty Projectors** at an event in Iowa, as well as **Adele** telling **Donald Trump** not to use her music at rallies. Will Trump, then, call on endorsees including **Ted Nugent**, **Kid Rock** and rapstress **Azealia Banks**, who notes sagely, "Donald Trump is evil like America is evil"? … audiophiles, dare you forsake your vinyl? A new reel-to-reel tape player called Project R2R is in production by the Austrian **HORCH HOUSE** firm. Now they just need to start making the reels …say it isn't so, **STATUS QUO** (below), who'll play their "last electric tour" this October. "It's 30 years since we last said we were stopping," said **Francis Rossi**, "but this is a final decision." But they might still do "the odd special…"

Getty Images

Tinseltown crier: Nicholas Krgovich seeks the troubling, contradictory and intangible.

MOJORISING

NICHOLAS KRGOVICH

Vancouver pop dissembler completes his dreamlike R&B trilogy salute to Hollywood.

Nicholas Krgovich still remembers visiting Universal Studios in 1994. Back then, the Vancouver native was just 13, and, like most kids, stared wide-eyed as the Universal tram ferried him past the Back To The Future clock-tower and the Psycho house down to "Amity Harbour" for a hydraulic attack from a past-his-best shark called Jaws. However, there was one strange and magical vision that wasn't on the list.

"There was a really long escalator that descended down to the backlot," remembers Krgovich, "and I just had this very pure tingle of excitement looking out over this horizon of rectangular buildings, where people were working and things were happening. I wasn't a part of it, I was apart from it, and it felt exciting and weird."

This banal, eerie vision, the anonymous sprawl of hangars and soundstages behind the rides and the tourist attractions, stayed with Krgovich. It's there at the heart of his most recent project, a bewitching trilogy of albums that chronicle the lonely lives of the dreamers and drifters who inhabit the side-roads and backhills of Hollywood.

"I've always had a long-standing attraction to this weird factory city where people make pop culture," says Krgovich. "There's a lot of yearning to be a part of this dreamy and ambiguous thing that also seems troubling and full of contradictions and the intangible."

The idea was formed in the winter of 2008, when, on the way to the Banff Centre, a songwriting residency in the Rocky Mountains, Krgovich bought the annual Vanity Fair Hollywood issue. He was tickled by the gap between the two worlds when "making a record about Hollywood while deer tiptoed outside my window". It was, says Krgovich, a chance to work outside of his comfort zone, something he's repeatedly done since the late '90s, composing post-modern miniatures with Vancouver chamber-pop quartet P:ano, Brill Building girl-group art project Gigi, and the lonesome R&B-inspired show tunes he wrote with P:ano offshoot, No Kids.

"I have a strong attraction to the process of trying to unpack what's going on," explains Krgovich. "Not to try and make sense of it, though. I like things that confuse and make my heart jump."

The Hollywood idea, however, became Krgovich's biggest unpacking problem. It took the multi-instrumentalist six years before *On Sunset*, the first album of the trilogy, appeared in 2014. A gauzy melancholy blend of '70s soul pleading, sweet female backing vocals, and lonely late-night '80s soul, inspired by "Sunset Boulevard, heavy and sticky nights and broken dreams…", *On Sunset* was quickly followed by 2015's *On Cahuenga*, where Krgovich re-recorded *On Sunset*'s multilayered, wide-screen cityscape narratives in an afternoon, for just voice and electric piano. Now we have *The Hills*. Recorded in Vancouver with Colin Stewart (Black Mountain) and mixed with John Collins (Destroyer, New Pornographers), *The Hills* is like a zoom-lens close-up on certain details and characters from *On Sunset*.

Krgovich only ever performs these songs solo in the US but in March he will be playing songs from the trilogy in the UK with his UK bandmates Mason Le Long, Joe Carvell, and Matt Rheeston from Batsch. After that, he'll be back in the studio to start work on a new project. "It's time," says Krgovich, "to smash it all on the floor and start again."

Andrew Male

"I LIKE THINGS THAT CONFUSE AND MAKE MY HEART JUMP."

FACT SHEET

- For fans of: Arthur Russell, Prefab Sprout, Frank Ocean.
- He feels the two films that come close to his vision of LA are the 1968 adaptation of a John Cheever short-story, The Swimmer, starring Burt Lancaster, and no-budget 2015 indie comedy Tangerine, shot entirely on the streets of Los Angeles using just an iPhone 5S.
- One song that changed his world was the 2005 R&B hit One Thing, by Amerie. "I had a bit of a Smells Like Teen Spirit moment with that song," he says. "All of a sudden I was: This is it! I don't know what this is, what is going on?!"

KEY TRACKS

- Along The PCH On Oscar Night
- The Backlot
- Rock's Detail

David MacGillivray

MINDBLOWERS!

BARRY ADAMSON

Bad Seed/noir cineaste picks songs of crime, angst and murder.

GLI INTOCCABILI
ENNIO MORRICONE

1 ENNIO MORRICONE
GLI INTOCCABILI (TITOLI)

(From Gli Intoccabili [aka Machine Gun McCain] OST, Jolly Hi-Fi, 1969)

"I bought a few 'mafia movie' scores at a nerdy soundtrack fair back in the '90s and this track, weird, jazzy and tense, really stood out and became a crime jazz reference point for future inspiration. I used it in a hitman movie I made whilst at film school in New York and it lifted the scene way beyond its worth! Plus, the film stars the great John Cassavetes as a bank robber who, released from prison, gets involved in a Vegas heist with his son and a Mafia hood. As the track builds, I still get the same thrill when the dissonance of the strings jar up against the guitar. Ennio Morricone is a genius. This is the killer version where the reading of the score and the execution of the music is precise and gutsy and compelling."

All Night Long
MUSIC FROM THE SOUND TRACK
fontana

2 TUBBY HAYES AND JOHNNY SCOTT
SKIN FEVER

(From All Night Long OST, Fontana, 1962)

"I first came across this slice of cool many years ago on a compilation tape that Mufti, then from the band Einstürzende Neubauten, was listening to, a great tape he made up of scores from different movies, with composers like Quincy Jones, Henry Mancini and Bernard Herrmann. I knew nothing about where this piece came from for a long time, then came across the movie All Night Long with its jazz score. Staple stuff for a late '60s kitchen sink interracial drama, but then Patrick McGoohan from The Prisoner is seen playing the *drum* solo to the track flawlessly! Worth checking out on YouTube: McGoohan's looks add to the drama of the solo and he just kills it. And everyone in the room."

3 SEXTILE
CAN'T TAKE IT

(From A Thousand Hands, Felte, 2015)

"I haven't heard of them outside of the LA community they spring from. They play like their lives depend on it. I hope they become huge. I can listen to this on repeat and often do: it's a great combination of sloppy synths that lull you into the landscape, and then when the guitars kick in we arrive at a disparate and desperately beautiful place. Experimental and at the same time totally accessible. I guess to me it feels like great rock music of the past, but then at the same time it lurches magnificently into the future. A video of the song is in production. The whole album is brilliant. I could bang on about Into The Unknown with the same feverish excitement."

4 EDDIE KENDRICKS
MY PEOPLE… HOLD ON

(From People… Hold On, Tamla, 1972)

"I heard it first on the 'Black Power' compilation *Stand Up And Be Counted* (Harmless, 1999) which I bought initially for a track by The Last Poets. Eddie Kendricks was synonymous with the song Keep On Trucking, which was a light-hearted '70s disco romp, whereas this cut is dark and political. The haunting backwards FX and African drums set the scene brilliantly before a Curtis Mayfield-style vocal that imagines panning shots across a war-torn inner city ghetto. Also worthy of note on the same compilation is a track by the guy who sang the soul heartbreak infidelity song, Me And Mrs Jones, Billy Paul. The track's called East – a lurid tale of inner city angst."

RBX
THE RBX FILES

5 RBX
THE EDGE

(From The RBX Files, Premeditated, 1995)

"Having just recently seen the awesome Straight Outta Compton, I started reminiscing about '90s hip hop in general and remembered being turned onto this guy RBX. What was and still is great about this whole record is not just the Doctor Dre diss – ! – but the acute descriptions of mindless violence in the songs, made cinematic by a constant barrage of extremely high quality, 'Welcome To Hollywood' FX tracks. Guns and helicopters and police radios pepper the terrain, making it so that each song puts you in the centre of the narrative, and this one is the best example of this almost casual idea of shooting and killing somebody. Lyrics like 'bullets will be zippin' zappin', bodies collapsing', still resonate menacingly in what is an enthralling musical, albeit chilling, landscape."

Barry's Know Where To Run is out now on Central Control

Shadow guvnor: Barry Adamson resonates menacingly.

ROCK'N'ROLL CONFIDENTIAL

CARLY SIMON

The golden-hued contralto on heartbreak, candid memoirs and Henry Root.

"You have to tell me exactly where you are," says Carly Simon down the line from New York. "I just love London. How far are you from Wilton Place?" Once MOJO has divulged its south London home office, noticeably less ritzy than Wilton Place's Belgravia locale where Simon spent six weeks in 1965, we establish that she's lying on her bed in the same Martha's Vineyard house where she and James Taylor lived. Her ex-husband is one of the Boys Of The Trees, the title of Simon's new memoir that confesses with nerveless candour the spells cast by the 'Orpheus' archetype, those divinely gifted male musicians that crossed her path – Cat Stevens, Kris Kristofferson, Mick Jagger and Taylor included. Though it all starts with dad, the Simon of US publishing giant Simon & Schuster, a gifted pianist according to Carly, but who favoured her two older sisters, which psychologists might say drove her into the arms of all those Orpheuses – though Wilton Place was home to her aristocratic English lover Willie Donaldson.

Who was Willie Donaldson?

He was our manager when the Simon Sisters [folksinging duo Carly and sister Lucy] did shows in London. He was the producer of Beyond The Fringe, and he wrote The Henry Root Letters. He was hilariously funny… he was friends with Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers. I just adored Willie. It was as if I had found the greatest story of my life, and he became a story because it lasted such a short time between us.

Reign in vain: Carly Simon, comfortable with the secrets of the past.

"YOU'RE SO VAIN – PEOPLE LIKE TO HAVE A PUZZLE."

Why a memoir, and why now?

I started one in 1987, I had a call from [close friend] Jackie Onassis, who asked me to write an autobiography on behalf of a publisher, so I wrote 80 pages, but I realised it was too raw. Any book I'd want to write had to tell the truth, and that was too uncomfortable, because my mother was still alive, and I didn't want to write about the nucleus of what my book became, about my parents' relationship and those spawned from that, and mine with various men.

In large swathes, it's a very revealing read, and painfully so.

The most painful part was reliving the rejection I felt from my father. And then when he got sick, I just wanted to save him [he died of a heart attack when Carly was 16]. Embrace Me, You Child [from Simon's 1972 album *No*

Secrets] is about my father and God, and how there was nothing those two couldn't do.

After your London sojourn, you went solo – what kind of singer did you want to be?

That was my problem, I didn't know who I was. I once sent a demo to Jerry Ragovoy, who [co-]wrote Piece Of My Heart, he said, "You have a great voice but I don't know what your personality is, are you a jazz or a folk singer, a rock singer or a club singer?" I loved Annie Ross, Judy Collins, Joan Baez, Odetta, and then I discovered male singers, Harry Belafonte and Cat Stevens, Neil Young and Mick Jagger. You try to imitate them, and then one day you wake up and it's you. But what I do know is that I was always expansive in my attitude to melody and chord changes, like on *Sgt. Pepper* and *Pet Sounds*.

People still talk about You're So Vain, which you've aided and abetted – you've admitted the second verse addresses former lover Warren Beatty, while one version has the guy's name whispered on it.

That's from [2009's] *Never Been Gone*, which was a home recording of old songs, but the name's played backward! The thing is, the other two [subjects] don't know it's about them, so it's not fair to say. But people like to have a puzzle. Sometimes it's fun to talk about.

In the book, you say how you and James Taylor were, "the perfect fourth": that you were F sharp and he was C sharp.

Those were our best notes, everyone has one. Mine's probably gone down to an F now. When we sang together, it seemed to be all right in the world.

And now you haven't talked in over 25 years.

As long as we're both on this Earth, I don't think that I won't want to have a communication with James. The more I desire it, the sadder I feel that our children have felt pretty awful about it most of their lives, that he put down a real iron curtain. Maybe he's built up so much energy around it that he can't break it himself. It's got to be his second wife who's putting on the pressure. In some ways, we repeat what's happened with our parents – I found another man to pretend I'm not there. But my second husband does see me, and loves me.

Tell us something you've never told an interviewer before.

I pray at night, a little confessional of my own, which I've done since forever. I'm pretty comfortable with secrets of the past, because by the end of the day, there will be a pile more.

Martin Aston

Boys In The Trees is published by Flatiron Books. Its musical companion Songs From The Trees is available on Rhino.

Heidi Wild, Alamy

LAST NIGHT A RECORD CHANGED MY LIFE

BOB WEIR

The Grateful Dead's guitar and voice lauds John Coltrane's *Africa/Brass.*

I was 16, living at home with my folks. I remember it was a Friday night, and we went to Phil [Lesh]'s house in Palo Alto, late '65 – "Hey, come over to my place and let's dig Miles." It might have been a guy named David X who was a friend of Pigpen's who turned me onto *Africa/Brass*. He played a lot of jazz, I got into it and it grabbed me so thoroughly, so immediately, I went into the music. Jerry [Garcia] was intimately familiar with this album; he was there when I listened to it for the first time. I remember he had a big grin on his face, "Fuck, listen to that!"

After I heard it I had to have it. There was only one record store in Menlo Park on Santa Cruz Avenue, and I went and I got a copy. I was 16 years old. All the stuff that those guys were playing was way, way out of my reach.

So I just listened to it because I dug it, thinking, "Maybe someday, I'll be able to incorporate some of this stuff, the fundamentals at least, into what I'm doing", and eventually I started doing that.

You can only try when you're 16.

Trane, Weir all crazy now: Bob (below) remains grabbed.

"I STEAL FROM THIS ENDLESSLY."

When you get into your twenties and you spend a year of your life on stage playing you start to develop a tactile knowledge for where the notes are and that's when you can start pulling this stuff up, that's when you start finding this stuff.

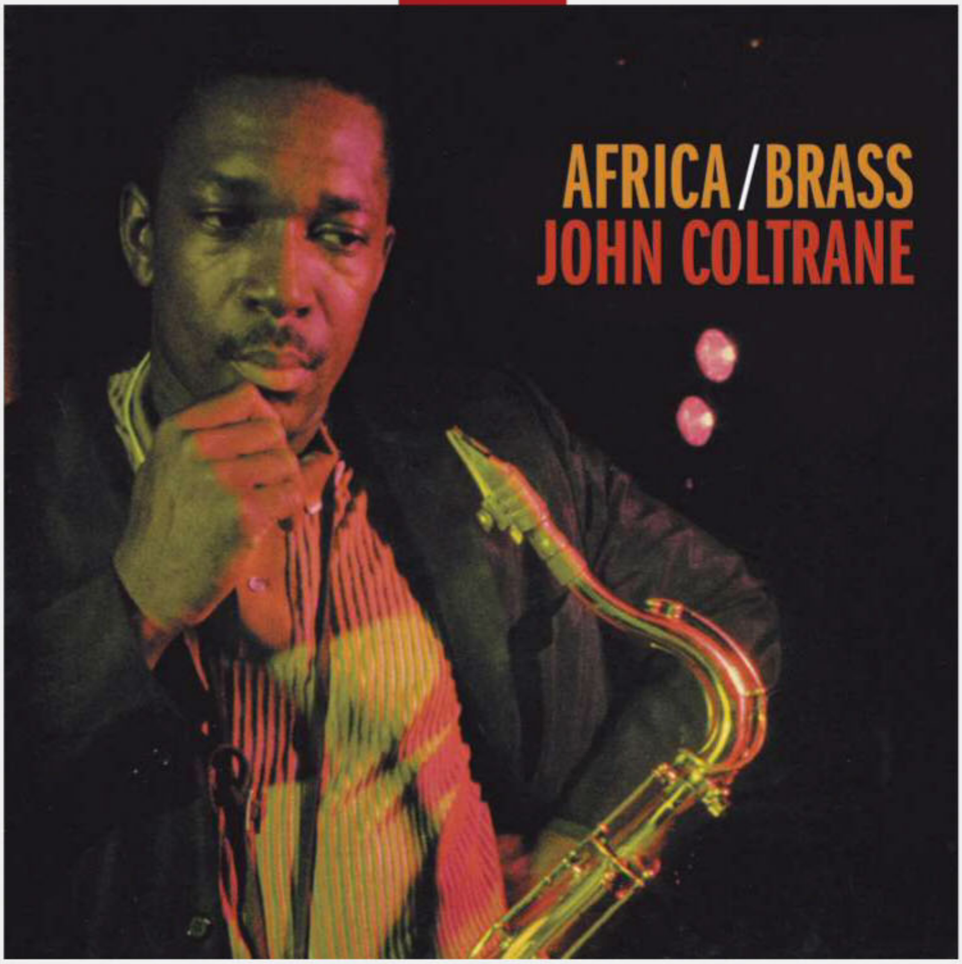
Listening to it now takes me back to Palo Alto, to my formative years when everything was impossible, so let's get to work! This kind of musical facility was just unthinkable to me. "How am I going to get there? How am I going to do this?" And then: "Left foot, right foot dumbfuck!" Slow steady steps and find your way into it.

McCoy Tyner is where I learned to play guitar. His comping fed harmonic ideas to Coltrane. "Let's push this way, let's open that up a little bit." And then Coltrane would open that up and then McCoy would stand out and come up with another place to push it.

They made their magic together, kept the ball moving down the field. Tyner was the running game, and Coltrane was the passing game. Elvin Jones was singular. The guy's got perfect time. He knows where that beat is all the time, he never gets off it. Jerry Garcia once described him as "a tool chest going down a marble staircase".

I steal from this endlessly; I'm not done plundering these guys.

Todd Prusin



Jarvis festival: (main) Pulp play the Pyramid stage, Glastonbury, June 25, 1995, with Russell Senior (left), Mr Cocker and Candida Doyle; (right, from top) the band (from left) Cocker, Senior, Doyle, Nick Banks and Steve Mackey; with the Finn Brothers and Morrissey on Later With… Jools Holland, November 11, 1995; Jarv with The Stone Roses, Glastonbury; that hit single; Russell with Elastica's Justine Frischmann, Glastonbury.

MOJOEYEWITNESS

PULP TRIUMPH WITH COMMON PEOPLE AT GLASTONBURY, 1995

Britpop was in full swing when Sheffield's acrylic outsiders became national champions with their signature hit and heroic deputising for The Stone Roses at Worthy Farm. The years of obscurity they'd navigated beforehand threw what was gained and lost into sharp contrast…

PART 1 "THIS WILD MASS GOING MAD."

Guitarist and co-pilot Russell Senior on unexpected rapture, drugs and mustard motors.

"Our first proper hit came [in 1994] with Do You Remember The First Time?, which was over 10 years after we'd started – longer than The Beatles' whole career. Pulp's early years were a story of hope then dashed hope. The thing that springs to mind, in terms of the pathos and frustration of the 'wilderness' years, is us going back, for the umpteenth time, to play at Hull Adelphi, which is basically a small pub. This would have been about 1990 and we were advertised as 'Eighties favourites Pulp'. We were already ancient history and we'd not even sold a thousand records – an '80s nostalgia act when the 1990s had hardly started. We'd become this parade of the clowns when, in our minds, we were the heirs to Joy Division. After that I went for a job as an ice-cream man. But then we got a show in London where there were all these floppy-fringe people, as opposed to our normal day-release crowd. It was a kind of nascent Britpop crowd…

We signed to Island and got a bit of an advance. Me and Jarvis bought cars for a few hundred quid. I bought an Alfasud Cloverleaf, a stylish boy-racer thing and Jarvis bought a mustard Hillman Imp. Myself and Jarvis hated each other's taste in *everything* – clothes, music, architecture, colours. [The cars] summed up our stylistic differences. I was going for sexy Italian and Jarvis was more Mr Bean.

When Jarvis first played us his original version of Common People – on one of those Casio organs that John Shuttleworth uses – we absolutely did not expect it to be a hit. It was a kind of comedy oompah song, and it was seven minutes long. Then we went into the studio with [producer] Chris Thomas and he got the pruning shears out and managed to create a pop song out of it. Before that it was a kind of poor man's Stereolab, a grinding churn. Then it acquired all this dynamism. Then we knew it was selling well and we listened to the chart run-down. It went into the Top 10 and it still hadn't been placed. Then we knew it was either Number 1 or 2… and it was Number 2, kept off Number 1 by Robson & Jerome. We had champagne on ice, but no one wanted to drink it. We'd have taken Top 10 beforehand, but it all suddenly felt like a terrible anti-climax. Like getting £10,000 on Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? and falling one step from the million.

Then we headlined Glastonbury when The Stones Roses had to pull out. We were in the middle of recording the *Different Class* album and were convinced we were going to get bottled off. When we started playing, the lights shone in our eyes. We couldn't see the audience and the wind blew the sound away. We heard a little ripple of polite applause but not the roars we were used to when we played to 600 people. Then the lights were turned on the audience and I saw this wild mass just going mad and singing along with Common People. It was kind of unreal, maybe like a slow-motion car accident. We'd done it, we'd pulled off this legendary concert.

[Drugs] were part of the way things went after *Different Class*, but drugs can be a symptom rather than a cause. We were touching the edges of more heroin-y scenes and that really is horrible. I was at some awards night with my girlfriend. She went to the loos and this woman came up to her and said, 'Oh, that's a nice dress.' Then she asked if my girlfriend had any 'charlie', to which the answer was 'No.' The woman said, 'Not a nice dress then,' and walked away. That sums up that scene at that time. I left the band as work started on *This Is Hardcore*. I was at a party with Chris Thomas. He said, 'It's 1.30 in the morning now. In 10 minutes' time it'll be six in the morning. It's time to go.' That's how I felt – get out while it's still cool."

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1 COMMON PEOPLE FULL LENGTH VERSION
2 UNDERWEAR

TURN OVER! PULP DRUMMER NICK BANKS ON FEAR, FANS AND KEEPING THE FAITH.

Camera Press (2), Justin Thomas, Pymca, Rex

PULP DIFFERENT CLASS

Nights on the tiles: Pulp, living the jetset life-style (from left) Senior, Cocker, Mackey, Doyle and Banks with (inset) that hit album; (above) Jarv presents Brian Eno (left) and David Bowie with gongs at Q magazine awards, October 1995.

PART 2 "WE'RE MAKING A HIT RECORD!"

PULP TRIUMPH WITH COMMON PEOPLE AT GLASTONBURY, 1995

Pulp drummer Nick Banks on how private planes replaced tinfoil stage sets.

"My first rehearsal with Pulp was maybe just as the *Freaks* album was coming out [in 1987]. Things did go wrong. At the show that was billed as 'The Day That Never Happened' we were at the peak for home-made multimedia spectacular. You'd see Bonnie Tyler on Top Of The Pops covered in dry ice. We thought that would be great, but with no idea how it worked. Russell got a couple of lads pouring hot water onto chemicals, with a hair dryer trying to blow this pathetic mist on to the stage. We wanted back-projections and that turned out to be a telly covered in tinfoil…

There were numerous times when the band seemed to come to an end. Russell would say, 'That's it, I've had enough, neurrgh, neurrgh…' But there was just enough of a pulse… Then we were on Island and everything started to fall right. When I first heard Common People [as a demo] it sounded rubbish – as with all Jarvis things, it was very badly recorded. For vocals, a bit of mumbling… It only struck home when we were in the studio. By that point you could hear the words, which had been written the night before. He [Jarvis] was like a kid doing his homework on the bus… When we were recording it, someone was making a noise in the corridor. [Producer] Chris Thomas stormed out and shouted, 'We're trying to make a fucking hit record here!' You started thinking, Yeah, we're making a hit record!

At Glastonbury we stood in when The Stones Roses pulled out. We were still in the studio, recording the second half of *Different Class* and we started making phone calls to find hotels. There were just none to be had, so we sent a roadie out to get some tents and we had Camp Pulp in the backstage area. Before the show you've never seen five people more nervous. We were sitting on these plastic chairs in a Portakabin and you could almost hear the chairs rattling. But we started playing and it seemed to be going well. Jarvis's chat between songs particularly seemed to connect – 'Keep believing, because if five idiots like us can do this…' We played Common People last – surprise, surprise – and the volume of the singing from the audience was just huge. Afterwards, Robbie Williams was bouncing around and Oasis were saying hello. Very nice –beforehand we'd expected volleys of mud and 80,000 people shouting for Fools Gold.

After that we just got to play so many memorable places. We had our own Pulp plane for a week. Sadly there was no livery on the outside – no Pulp Air. But it did say 'Pulp' on all the headrests. We played in Finland with Blur and told them we were off to Iceland next in our plane. They asked if they could come and we were able to say, 'Yeah, just jump aboard.'"

As told to Roy Wilkinson

Russell Senior's book Freak Out The Squares: Life In A Band Called Pulp is out now from Aurum Press.

"WHEN I FIRST HEARD COMMON PEOPLE IT SOUNDED RUBBISH."

Photoshot, Press Association

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father john misty

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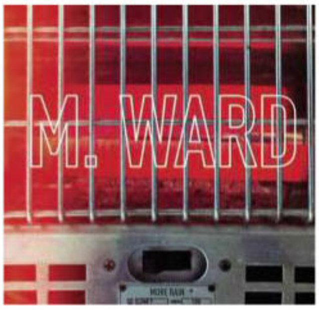

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ON THE ROAD

BLUES AT CARNEGIE HALL

Worldbeating guitarman Joe Bonamassa gets to the famous 7th Avenue venue, and makes a movie of it. "You're dealing with old rules," he explains.

"I was warned about Carnegie Hall," says Joe Bonamassa. "The sound in there…" His voice tails off. "My drummer Anton Fig hit his snare drum and it was like shooting off a pistol. I'm just so glad we didn't do it with the electric band. It would have been miserable."

It's a freezing New York afternoon in late January, the day before the big blizzard, and the 38-year-old blues-rock journeyman, dressed down in work jacket and trucker's cap – advertising Gus's Famous Fried Chicken of Austin, Texas – is sitting in the restaurant of a midtown hotel round the corner from the famous venue. He's assessing the success of last night's performance, the penultimate date on an all-acoustic tour along the East Coast, and the first in a brace of filmed evenings at the 125-year-old Manhattan venue.

"They charged us half a million to film and that's just their union bill," explains Bonamassa, in his upstate New York drawl. "It's so pedantic. If you want a Coca-Cola in a glass you have to staff a bartender to pour it. I needed a guitar I'd left on-stage and they told my tour manager, 'He violated the dark stage, $14,000 fine.' You're dealing with old rules. It's like playing the Vatican."

However, the Carnegie gigs are a necessary culmination of sorts. The realisation of a childhood dream, back from when the teenage Bonamassa, up in Manhattan for guitar lessons, would sit across the road in the Carnegie Deli, thinking, "What if…", the concerts will be released as a double live DVD later in the year, the last in a run of releases that have already captured him in full blues-rock pomp at the Royal Albert Hall, Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Los Angeles' Greek Theatre, and the Vienna Opera House.

It's also the punchline to a famous gag, and if anyone has put in the practice, it's Bonamassa, who started learning guitar at the age of four, jamming along to his father's Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton, Free and Led Zeppelin LPs. At 12, Bonamassa had his own band, and was playing live with John Lee Hooker and opening for B.B. King. In the following years, the guitarist steadily established a venerable blues-rock "brand" (he happily uses the term himself) that has won him a lucrative live following as well as naysayers who criticised him for his over-reliance on covers, his banks of delays and effects, and an occasional, well, safeness to his playing. Surprisingly, the first person to agree with this was Bonamassa.

"We did a fair amount of touring from 2010 to 2014 where I don't remember much of it," he admits. "I probably rode the old covers wagon as much as any blues artist. People were saying the playing had become 'safe' and was lacking 'feel'. That's the worst place to be."

In response, Bonamassa changed his band, stripped out the reverb and echo, started playing through old '50s tweed amps, and re-immersed himself in the art of songwriting. "You throw a cherry bomb into your world," he says. "You just go with the guitar and the microphone and figure it out with these. (*Holds up and wiggles hands about*) "My pilot light went back on."

For the songwriting boot camp, he set up a Nashville office, where he works with professional lyricists and composers for two months of the year. The first fruits came on 2014's *Different Shades Of Blue*. Bonamassa's latest, *Blues Of Desperation*, is a better album again, reinvesting his "brand" with a warmth, character and humour that got lost somewhere back on the road. Tonight, the Carnegie Hall concert showcases these new songs, plus crowd favourites, in a live setting that places the guitarist's soulful showmanship within a tradition of old American vaudeville.

The auditorium smells of Greek pitch, and antique lamps and candles light the stage, while his band is made up of one-time Double Trouble keyboardist Reese Wynans, David Letterman's former house-band sticksman Anton Fig,

First he takes Manhattan: (from left) Tina Guo, Mahalia Barnes, Gary Pinto, Juanita Tippins and Joe Bonamassa at Carnegie Hall, January 22, 2016; (below) Joe backstage with his 1919 Gibson Style U harp guitar.

"SOME OF THE FURROWED BROW CROWD GIVE ME SHIT ABOUT NOT BEING AUTHENTIC."

Christie Goodwin (10)

THE ANDREW CARNEGIE SOCIETY

Egyptian percussionist Hossam Ramzy, Chinese erhu/cello player Tina Guo and Eric Bazilian of The Hooters on banjo and mandolin. Three backing singers – Gary Pinto, Mahalia Barnes and Juanita Tippins – are all kitted out in their ancestral costumes (that's India, Thailand and Polynesia), while Bonamassa's clad in black shirt and jacket, with requisite dark sunglasses to protect his light-sensitive pale blue eyes from the glare of the stage lights.

Throughout, he relocates his blues-rock ballads and rockers to a harmonically rich and cosy world of bright melodies and acoustic drone, at times reminiscent of Ry Cooder's '70s LP experiments in blues, country and soul. Fittingly, one highlight tonight is a stripped-back cover of Blind Alfred Reed's How Can A Poor Man Stand Such Times And Live, as covered on Cooder's 1970 solo debut. Another is an exhilarating Duelling Banjos-style battle between Guo and Bonamassa on a high-speed guitar-vs-cello reinterpretation of Bonamassa's Woke Up Dreaming that transforms into Rimsky-Korsakov's Flight Of The Bumblebee. It's both faintly ridiculous and deadly serious, as all quality entertainment should be, and by the end of the evening, after an encore of Bette Midler's The Rose, the 3,000-capacity Stern auditorium is on its feet.

But as one project ends, so another begins. In July Bonamassa will be playing five UK shows saluting the three British blues rock guitarists who inspired him – Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page. He literally doesn't stop.

"I have to be careful about that," he admits. "By the end of last year I'd gotten sick maybe seven times and by the end of it, I decided to shut it down for a month. That month felt like a year. It just becomes, what it is. My 50th anniversary will be on my 62nd birthday. It harkens back to what I learned from B.B. King. B.B. was a machine. He loved living on the road. He loved one-nighters, theatres. But he was the high-water mark, the high operator. He always wore a tuxedo."

MOJO asks if Bonamassa has any career advice of his own for musicians starting out. "If you're making money don't put it all in your pocket," he says, "always try and reinvest it, try to get the show bigger and bigger so people keep coming back. And avoid the cliché. The cliché is what kills you."

Andrew Male

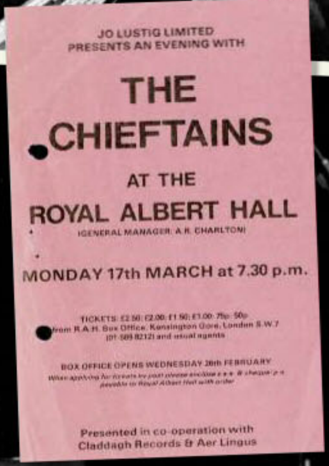
Blues Of Desperation is released on March 25, supported by three UK dates; Salute To The British Blues Explosion tour starts at Preston Hoghton Tower on July 2; for more info go to jbonamassa.com/tour-dates

New York states of mind: (clockwise from top left) loading in; playing to the Carnegie Society; the Stern Auditorium; in full flow; keysman Reese Wynans; Tina Guo; exterior view; sound-checking with the crew.

BOLERODYNAMIC

Joe on Jeff Beck's *Truth*, the LP that defined his aesthetic.

"I never learned to play 'songs', I learned how to jam along with records. When you listen to *Live Cream* at Winterland or Rory Gallagher's *Irish Tour '74* you can sit there for hours and jam along with the rhythm parts and the lead parts. The Jeff Beck Group's *Truth* (Beck, with Joe, below) was my record. To me, this ramshackle band that had so much swagger was such a fresh take on the blues. From there I got into *Beck-Ola* and early '70s live Clapton, then Cream, then Led Zeppelin after that. And once I realised that Blues Deluxe [on *Truth*] was nothing but [B.B. King's] Gambler's Blues and [Buddy Guy's] Stone Crazy pushed together, that got me into Buddy Guy, then you get Muddy, then Howlin' Wolf, then Ry Cooder, and then I'm thinking, If these guys were taking old songs and doing them their own way, why can't I? That was the beginning of the beginning. That's why I never had a hang-up about 'authenticity'. Some of the furrowed brow crowd give me shit about not being authentic, when you know that's never been the point. Robert Johnson would have picked up his Gibson L-O and said, "Hey, here's what it sounds like *today*."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TIMEMACHINE

MARCH 1975 ...THE CHIEFTAINS PLAY THE ALBERT HALL

MARCH 17 Jo Lustig was many things to many people. A Brooklyn-born New Yorker, he could be tough and exuded little patience with those he felt were wasting his time. But he loved music and wanted the best for the singers and musicians he represented. He'd been around, garnering press for a range of stellar entertainers that spanned Miles Davis, Nat 'King' Cole, Dave Brubeck and others of equal stature. He'd even had an association with Jack Kerouac at one point.

But it was the link with Nat Cole that changed his life. He accompanied Cole on a trip to Britain in 1960 and fell in love with the place. Soon after, he relocated to London, where he had notable success promoting Julie Felix and gaining Nico her first recording contract. By 1969 he was established as manager of The Pentangle, then moved to advance the careers of Ralph McTell, Steeleye Span, Richard Digance and Richard And Linda Thompson.

While attending the Midem music industry get-together at Cannes in early 1975, Lustig met Paddy Moloney, leader of Irish semi-pro band The Chieftains. The band had been founded by uilleann piper Moloney in 1962 when he got together with fiddler Martin Fay, flautist Michael Tubridy, tin whistle virtuoso Seán Potts and bodhrán player David Fallon, intending to record a one-off instrumental album. However, The Chieftains decided to continue making music whenever their regular jobs would allow, with all-Ireland fiddle champion Seán Keane joining their ranks and Peadar Mercier eventually replacing Fallon. During 1973 the band had released *The Chieftains 4*, a superb, imaginatively packaged album, on Claddagh, a label for which Moloney was managing director.

For *Chieftains 4* Paddy added the sound of the harp, played by Derek Bell, a classically trained harpist from Belfast who'd joined the group in 1973. The album featured Mná Na h Éireann (Women Of Ireland) an original composition by Seán Ó Riada, arranged by Paddy Moloney in a style that grabbed international attention. Another of its assets was a sleevenote by Peter Sellers, which explained how he, while living in a house in Kildare, introduced Spike Milligan to Moloney. "Out comes Paddy's whistle," wrote Sellers, "and he blew magic into the room. Jigs, airs, reels… the party ended early – about 3.30am. I still have some of it on a tape recorder…"

The Chieftains' music sparked an idea in Jo Lustig's fertile mind. He felt that he could provide the band with international acclaim if they would only turn professional. Paddy Moloney was sceptical. The band all had steady day jobs, music was just for fun.

But Lustig persisted: "OK," he said to Moloney, "I'll book you a great venue – the Royal Albert Hall." The Chieftains had been expecting a club date or something less daunting. "We couldn't play anything of that size,"

Folk, not dope: (main, from left) Seán Potts, Peadar Mercier, Paddy Moloney and (far right) Seán Keane on-stage at the Royal Albert Hall; (right, from top); the group backstage; show bill; harpist Derek 'Ding Dong' Bell; (below) super-fan Peter Sellers; *The Chieftains 4* album.

> **"JIGS, AIRS, REELS… THE PARTY ENDED EARLY – ABOUT 3.30AM."**
> **Peter Sellers**

The Chieftains 4
claddagh records

maintained Moloney. But the New Yorker was now in full promotional stride, attempting to grab every last vestige of publicity in order to fame-push the Irish band.

He returned to Paddy Moloney with a deal: "If I can sell out every seat in the hall, will you turn professional and have me as your manager?"

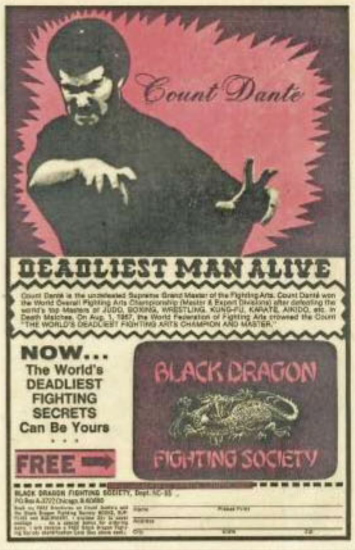
Moloney thought carefully; he doubted the band could fill the 6,000 seats. If the performance was played to a half-empty venue it could prove embarrassing, or even mean the end of the band. Even so, following further discussions with his fellow Chieftains, Moloney agreed to perform at the famed venue, on St Patrick's Night. That evening, despite doubts, the hall was packed, with MC John Peel explaining, "When they play a sad song it will bring a lump to your throat and when they play a bright dance, you'll have difficulty keeping your seat."

Robert Shelton, writing in The Times, reported, "The band sidled into a semicircle of seats, suggesting several tribal leaders about to ruminate over affairs of state. And off they went on an evening of insuperable national music. The Chieftains are without parallel, seven musicians so steeped in a tradition of airs, jigs, hornpipes, reels and hooray songs that all they can do is evoke green travelogues in the eye and ear."

It was a triumph for both The Chieftains and Jo Lustig, who not only signed a deal for Island Records to distribute the band's records, but also persuaded the band to provide incidental music for Stanley Kubrick's award-winning film Barry Lyndon. And, when all the smoke had cleared, The Chieftains were named group of the year in the Melody Maker's Readers' Poll for 1975, beating the likes of The Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin.

Fred Dellar

AD ARCHIVE 1975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Courtesy of Royal Albert Hall Archives, NI Syndications (4), Scope Features, Getty Images (3)

ALSO THIS MONTH

ARE YOU BEING SURFED?

1 At A&M Studios in Los Angeles, **Jan & Dean** (above) are finishing their first work in nearly a decade.

LINDA BUSTED

2 In Los Angeles **Linda McCartney** is charged with marijuana possession. She was in a car pulled over by police after running a red light.

WONDER CLAPPED

6 **Stevie Wonder** is the major award-winner at the Grammys, with *Fulfillingness' First Finale* grabbing Album Of The Year and Best Male Vocal Performance plaudits, while Living For The City is named Best R&B Song.

PLASTIC SOUL TIME

7 **David Bowie**'s *Young Americans* album is released. Tracks include a cover of Across The Universe and Fame, co-penned by Bowie, John Lennon and Carlos Alomar.

STONES PASS THE WAYNE

8 The NME reports that **The Rolling Stones** have selected US guitarist **Wayne Perkins**, late of **Smith, Perkins & Smith**, to replace **Mick Taylor**.

T-BONE CHECKS OUT

16 Texan bluesman **T-Bone Walker** dies at 64.

ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, ZAWINUL

17 **Weather Report** kick off a European tour in Copenhagen. They'll stop off in London to appear on BBC TV's Old Grey Whistle Test.

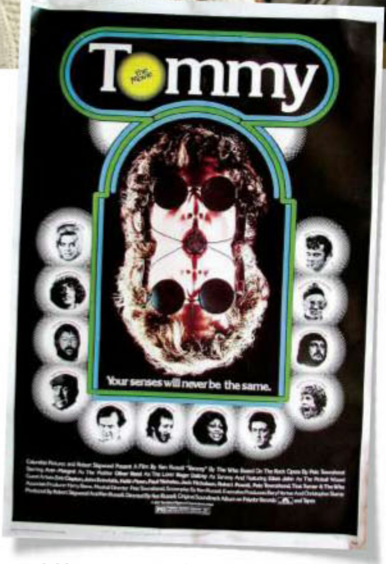
SHADS ARMY

22 **The Shadows** represent the UK in the Eurovision Song Contest. They play Paul Curtis's Let Me Be The One in Stockholm and finish second.

GIANT ZEPS

29 All six **Led Zeppelin** LPs appear on the US charts simultaneously, a feat never before achieved.

'Oo are you?: Mum (Ann-Margret) and 'Uncle' Frank (Oliver Reed, right) flank Tommy (Roger Daltrey).


Tommy
Your senses will never be the same.

TOMMY THE MOVIE PREMIERES

MARCH 26 The film Tommy, kitted out with what is hailed as 'Quintaphonic Sound', premieres at the Leicester Square Theatre in London. All the band attend, as does director Ken Russell, Ringo Starr, Elton John, Eric Clapton, Lulu and Robert Stigwood. The Guardian notes that Oliver Reed is outstanding as 'Uncle' Frank and Ann-Margret makes a likeable mum Nora, saying of Roger Daltrey's lead role, "It's hard to say if Roger Daltrey's Tommy could be improved as it consists of mooning facials and frenzied leaps. But if you look at his face long enough, you will admit that it is extraordinary." The invite advises, 'Dress Colourful'.

Ruder than you: Labelle reign supreme.

LABELLE TOP THE US CHARTS

MARCH 29 Labelle's libidinous Lady Marmalade grabs the top spot in the US singles chart, deposing Frankie Valli's My Eyes Adored You. Both songs were penned by Bob Crewe and Kenny Nolan, making the duo only the third song-writing team to succeed themselves at Number 1. Patti Labelle, who sings the lead, later says she had no idea the partially Francophone song was about prostitution, but concludes, "Hey, hookers are people too."

TOPTEN

SOUTH AFRICA SINGLES MARCH 15

1. **YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET** BACHMAN-TURNER OVERDRIVE MERCURY
2. **YOU'RE THE FIRST, THE LAST, MY EVERYTHING** BARRY WHITE 20TH CENTURY
3. **YOU ASK ME TO** BOBBY ANGEL PLUM
4. **SHE'S A WOMAN** NEIL HERBERT ANNIC
5. **I CAN HELP** BILLY SWAN MONUMENT
6. **YOU MAKE ME FEEL BRAND NEW** THE STYLISTICS AVCO
7. **JUNIOR'S FARM** PAUL McCARTNEY & WINGS APPLE
8. **LONGFELLOW SERENADE** NEIL DIAMOND CBS
9. **HELP ME MY LOVE** AFTER ALL REPRISE
10. **BEACH BABY** FIRST CLASS DECCA

Laying low at Number 7: Paul and Linda.

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DESPERADO

1948-2016

Voice, songwriter and founder member of the Eagles Glenn Frey left us on January 18.

It's April 4, 1985, and Glenn Frey's in London at the BBC. He's here to do his Beverly Hills Cop hit, The Heat Is On, on Top Of The Pops. He asks for a beer and when they tell him the Beeb serves no alcohol until after showtime, he just laughs, no diva fit, accepting a Coke can with a smile.

I'd been interviewing him and when I asked what he would say about himself, he answered, "I don't know: that I'm a nice guy? That I'm really not a laid-back Southern California country-rock kind of guy." He looks like a cast member of The Sopranos dressed for a part in Miami Vice. "I don't see myself as 'a star' at all. I guess you could say I'm an entertainer. But I'm a songwriter first and foremost. Writing is my first love and what's most important to me."

Frey was born in November 1948 in Detroit, "a working man's town". His father worked at a car factory; so did his mum, as a cook. It was a tough place, he said, "where you learn to develop your sense of humour and run fast." He was five when he started piano and 15 when The Beatles played Detroit Olympia Stadium on September 6, 1964. It was the crowd's reaction, the girls' in particular, that prompted him to take up guitar and form his first band, The Subterraneans. On leaving high school in 1966, Frey joined The Four Of Us, a Birmingham, Michigan band with Byrdsy harmonies and two singles under their belt. He met Bob Seger, who had him play and sing on some recording sessions and wrote a single, Such A Lovely Child, for Frey's next band, The Mushrooms. It didn't sell but it got Glenn his first TV appearance before the band dissolved and Frey formed Heavy Metal Kids.

By now he already planned to leave Detroit. "I thought, Well you have to go to New York or Los Angeles if you really want to make it and I already had an itch for California when they started having all the interviews in Life magazine about the hippies and free love and free grass and that sort of thing." Glenn's girlfriend had gone there, so he followed.

On the day he arrived, driving up Laurel Canyon he spotted David Crosby sitting on the front step of the Country Store, in the same leather cape he wore on The Byrds' album *Turn! Turn! Turn!*. Frey took it as an omen. A second sign came when he met another exiled Detroit musician, J.D. Souther, who was dating Frey's girlfriend's sister. Frey and Souther formed country-folk duo Longbranch Pennywhistle and signed to Amos Records for their 1969 self-titled debut. But there were problems with the label; they could neither make another album nor leave. Frey, who'd moved with Souther into Jackson Browne's small apartment in Echo Park, spent some of his time weeping into his beer at the Troubadour and the rest writing songs.

Among the musicians and music biz people Frey met at the famed folk club were Linda Ronstadt, Don Henley and David Geffen. Geffen agreed to listen to Frey's songs and told him he'd be better off in a band than solo. Ronstadt asked him to join hers for her upcoming tour. Since they also needed a drummer, Frey suggested Henley. "The very first night of the tour," Frey said, "Don and I decided we would start our own band."

Eagles – there was no 'the', as Frey kept telling us – managed, with Jackson Browne's help, to persuade Geffen to front them $125,000 to go to England to record an album with Glyn Johns. The opening track and the first of the album's three hit singles – two of which featured Frey on lead vocals – was a song Frey co-wrote with Browne, Take It Easy.

Eagles (1972), although made by a band of non-Californians in London, defined the California sound: mellow, melodic, country rock with sophisticated layers of harmony and guitars. "Our first couple of albums were less rock – though I think there was always that edge to us lyrically, even when the tracks were mellow," Frey said, "but in concerts we found we needed more uptempo material, stuff with a little harder edge."

THE LEGACY

Album: *Desperado* (Asylum, 1973)

The sound: Their second album, loosely a concept about a Western outlaw gang and recorded in England during the miners' strike, has a dark mood and rich sound. The ballads – including the Frey-Henley title track, one of their finest – have a beautiful weariness and an almost Neil Yo yearning for a lost innocence.

Taking it easy: (right) Glenn Frey in patch-work denim glory, 1974; (below) Frey in Stockholm, September 14, 1988.

> "I'M REALLY NOT A LAID-BACK SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COUNTRY-ROCK KIND OF GUY."

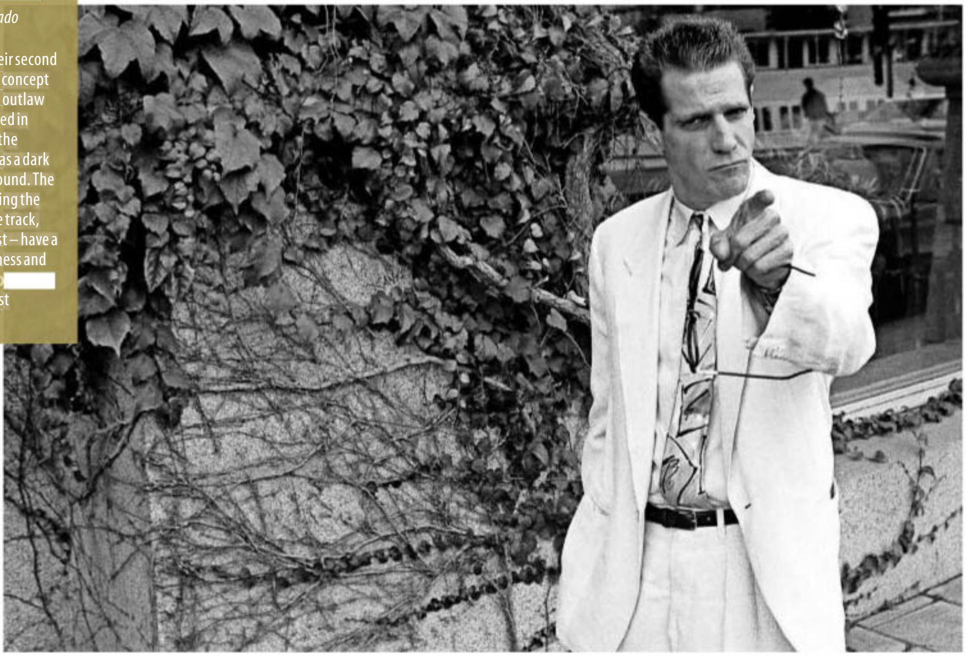
There were bands fusing rock and countrified ballads before them but none were so stratospherically successful. It peaked with *Hotel California* (1976) – all bar two songs written or co-written by Frey – which sold more than 30 million copies. It was also the album that rock writers held up as the prime exponent of coke-fuelled commercialism, the death of rock and the *raison d'être* of punk.

If the critics hated them, they didn't much like each other either. "It was the same with every record we made," Frey said. "By the time we finished, I'd walk out of the studio and get on the plane and say, I'm never going to do this again, no matter what." By *Eagles Live* (1980), the final album under their contract, Frey had quit, refused to speak to his bandmates and worked on his parts separately. The album famously credits five lawyers.

Frey's '80s solo career, if not as dizzying as Eagles', was a success: soundtrack songs for Beverly Hills Cop, Ghostbusters II and Thelma & Louise. In 1985, Miami Vice based an entire episode on his hit Smuggler's Blues, and Frey made his acting debut playing a junkie pilot. A handful of TV and film roles followed, including the starring role in the 1993 detective series South Of Sunset, cancelled after one episode.

The next year, Eagles got back together, continuing with huge success over the next two decades. In 2007 they recorded the seven-times platinum *Long Road Out Of Eden*. "It's one of those things," said Frey, who died in New York of pneumonia and complications arising from colitis and rheumatoid arthritis. "Like McCartney will always be a Beatle, I'll be an Eagle all my life."

Sylvie Simmons



Henry Diltz/Corbis, Photoshot

1941-2016

COME UP THE YEARS

Jefferson Airplane catalyst Paul Kantner died on January 28.

As the Summer of Love's peak moment approached, in June 1967, Jefferson Airplane's Paul Kantner was hunched studiously over his Rickenbacker on-stage at the Monterey Pop Festival. In dark-rimmed specs, and with a blond bob, he looked more like Peter & Gordon's Peter Asher with a Brian Jones barnet than a rock revolutionary in the making.

By the end of the decade, the guitarist had emerged as the band's unifying figure and chief ideologue, writer of inflammatory war cries like We Can Be Together and Volunteers, with their eulogies to the "forces of chaos and anarchy". He'd taken on the Hell's Angels at Altamont with a satirical "thanks" for knocking out Airplane singer Marty Balin, became one half of a hippy John and Yoko with partner and band co-vocalist Grace Slick, and started writing about the need to escape the world's ills and establish a freaks-only utopia on another planet.

When I spoke to him in 2005, Kantner was unrepentant in his commitment to his old ideals. "It's adolescent and impractical," he conceded, "but pointing a way to the star and not being able to get there does not decimate the value of the star. Some of humanity's best work is generated by a longing for the impossible."

Kantner's near evangelical zeal had its likely origins in his Catholic schooling, telling band biographer Jeff Tamarkin that he'd been abandoned to "nuns and guns". He found refuge in sci-fi and then, in 1959, folk music. By March 1965, and inspired by The Beatles, acid and electricity, he accepted local scene-maker Balin's invitation to form a group.

The pair struck up a writing partnership, rarely bettered than on the aching bliss-ballad Today on 1967's *Surrealistic Pillow*, the Airplane's second, and breakthrough, album. On the follow-up, the super-psych *After Bathing At Baxter's*, Kantner emerged as the key force, contributing six originals. One, Won't You Try/Saturday Afternoon, was the first of many to document the changing fortunes of the counter-culture that reverberated from Kantner's native San Francisco to turn on the world.

By 1970, and with both Jefferson Airplane and hippy idealism wobbling, Kantner released *Blows Against The Empire*, co-credited as Jefferson Starship. Picking up from where Wooden Ships (a co-write with David Crosby and Stephen Stills) left off, this all-star Bay Area set marked the high-point of Kantner's "naïve children hoping for a better world" philosophy.

After Jefferson Airplane split down the middle during 1972, Kantner (with Slick and a returning Balin) revived the Jefferson Starship name, changed direction and hit US Number 1 with 1975's AOR-friendly *Red Octopus*. Keeping a flicker of rebellion alive on songs like St Charles (*Spitfire*, 1976) and Stairway To Cleveland (*Modern Times*, 1981), Kantner eventually quit in 1984. A lawsuit over rights to the band name followed, but Kantner – still the outlaw, headband'n'all, until the end – spent much of the past two decades performing as Jefferson Starship.

He was, quite simply, "the catalyst that made the alchemy happen", wrote original Airplane lead guitarist Jorma Kaukonen upon news of his colleague's death from a heart attack.

Mark Paytress

Always going up: Paul Kantner in New York, October 20, 1967.

"SOME OF HUMANITY'S BEST WORK IS GENERATED BY A LONGING FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE."

THE LEGACY

Album: Paul Kantner/ Jefferson Starship, *Blows Against The Empire* (RCA Victor, 1970).

The Sound: Paul Kantner's Rickenbacker 360/12-string-playing had given early Jefferson Airplane records a classic folk-rock sound; by the time of *After Bathing At Baxter's*, his style had become more dynamic and versatile. This 1970 solo masterpiece stretched to hard rock (Mau Mau) and hillbilly (The Baby Tree), though extraordinary intergalactic acid folk lay at its heart.

GIORGIO GOMELSKY

IMPRESARIO

BORN 1934

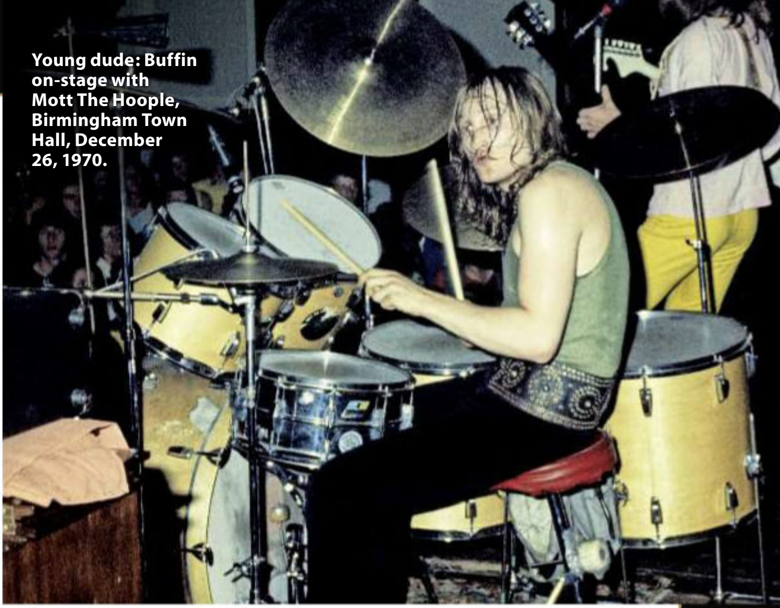
Born in Soviet-ruled Georgia, Giorgio Gomelsky was exposed to samizdat jazz in Nazi-occupied Western Europe, and read the Melody Maker at school in Switzerland. He came to London to film jazz, but became swept up in the blues scene, and by early '63 was promoting The Rolling Stones at the Crawdaddy Club in Richmond. Supplanted by Andrew Loog Oldham, he took a more decisive managerial role with The Yardbirds, founded the Marmalade label and also worked with The Animals, Soft Machine and John McLaughlin. In 1969 he went to Paris, where he worked with Gong and Magma, and later moved to New York. An international man who also counted production, songwriting and DJing among his endeavours, he said, "Jazz became my homeland."

Ian Harrison

DALE 'BUFFIN' GRIFFIN

MOTT THE HOOPLE DRUMMER

BORN 1948



Young dude: Buffin on-stage with Mott The Hoople, Birmingham Town Hall, December 26, 1970.

Dale 'Buffin' Griffin co-founded Mott The Hoople, who rose to notoriety with the wildest stage act the UK had seen since the early Rolling Stones, and then became chart stars after being given All The Young Dudes by David Bowie in 1972. Born in Ross-on-Wye, he gained his lifelong nickname 'Buffin' – an amalgamation of 'Sniffin' Bugger Griffin' – at school. He was playing with his future Mott bandmates in Silence when, recruited by madcap producer Guy Stevens, the band acquired their singer-pianist Ian Hunter and their name. Though infamous for having the longest hair and loudest amps – they were banned from the Royal Albert Hall in 1971 – they split after four albums, in March 1972. A mortified Bowie came to the rescue with All The Young Dudes, though it rankled with Buffin that pop stardom cost Mott their faithful core following. After the Bowie-produced album of the same name, Mott chose to strike out on their own for 1973's career-peaking *Mott* album, which was followed by hits including All The Way From Memphis and Roll Away The Stone. In late 1974, an exhausted Hunter quit, leaving Griffin and bassist Overend Watts to carry on as Mott and later British Lions. During the '80s, Griffin and Watts formed a production company, helming albums by Hanoi Rocks and The Cult, and hits such as Department S's Is Vic There?. Griffin also produced Radio 1 sessions by Pulp, The Smiths and Nirvana among others. For 25 years, he dreamed of the original Mott line-up playing together again but, in a cruel twist, was diagnosed with dementia when the band reunited to play their Hammersmith Apollo shows in October 2009, although he insisted on joining stand-in drummer Martin Chambers for the encores. As president of Mott's fan club for four years, this writer recalls Buffin's extraordinary consideration when it came to writing newsletters. A quiet soul with a devilish sense of humour, he died after fighting Alzheimer's disease for seven years.

Kris Needs

THEY ALSO SERVED

POP voice **KITTY KALLEN** (b.1921) found swing era fame with the big bands of **Jack Teagarden**, **Jimmy Dorsey**, **Artie Shaw** and **Harry James**, with whom she recorded the World War II hits It's Been A Long, Long Time and I'm Beginning To See The Light. She achieved transatlantic success with Little Things Mean A Lot in 1954, and her last US Top 20 hit, My Coloring Book, came in 1962.

BASSIST and guitarist **JIMMY BAIN** (b.1947) joined **Rainbow** for their 1976 album *Rising*. After his departure, he toured with **John Cale**, formed **Wild Horses** with ex-**Thin Lizzy** guitarist **Brian Robertson**, wrote and recorded with **Phil Lynott**, and joined **Dio** from 1983 to 1987. In 1985 he was instrumental in the Hear'n Aid charity single. Scottish-born Bain rejoined Dio from 2000 until 2010, and had recently played with Dio alumni group **Last In Line**, who were taking part in **Def Leppard**'s Hysteria On The High Seas cruise ship tour when he died.

WHISPERS voice **NICHOLAS CALDWELL** (b.1944) co-founded the San Francisco soul group in 1963. They enjoyed R&B chart success throughout the '70s, and hit big with And The Beat Goes On in 1979, which reached Number 2 in Britain. An attendant self-titled LP went platinum. They repeated this success with 1987's LP *Just Gets Better With Time*, from which US Number 7 single Rock Steady was taken.

BROADCASTER **SIR TERRY WOGAN** (b.1938) began working for BBC radio in 1966. He worked in TV from 1984 but returned to Radio 2 in 1993, where he remained until November 2015. His other achievements included presenting the Children In Need charity telethon, delivering amused commentaries on the Eurovision Song Contest and having a Number 21 hit with his brass band single The Floral Dance, in 1978. In memorial, **Morrissey** called him, "So very witty, yet never hurtful."

SINGER **COLIN VEARNCOMBE** (b.1962) first recorded as **Black** in 1981. After an unsuccessful stint on a major label, he released the single Wonderful Life on Manchester indie Ugly Man. Signed by A&M, he would enjoy two hits in 1987 with Sweetest Smile and a re-released Wonderful Life. He went on to record solo and as Black, his last album being *Blind Faith* last year. The Liverpool-born singer lived in Cork, where he died after a car crash.

CULT glam rocker **BRETT SMILEY** (b.1955) was managed by **Andrew Loog Oldham** when he made his LP *Breathlessly Brett* in 1974. Promotional efforts included the two appearing on **Russell Harty**'s TV show, but the album would go unreleased until 2003. In the meantime, Smiley would act, including a bit part in American Gigolo in 1980. In 2004 **Nina Antonia** published the biography The Prettiest Star: Whatever Happened To Brett Smiley? He died in Brooklyn.

DJ **ED 'STEWPOT' STEWART** (b.1941) served his broadcasting apprenticeship in Hong Kong and with pirate station Radio London before joining the inaugural Radio 1 intake in 1967. He started presenting Junior Choice in 1968, did his first Top Of The Pops in 1971, hosted kids' TV show Crackerjack from 1973 to 1979 and fronted 'Junior TV Times' mag Look-In from 1971-1980. In later years he worked for the BBC and commercial radio, and published his memoir Out Of The Stewpot in 2005.

R&B singer **BLOWFLY**, AKA **Clarence Henry Reid** (b.1939), had a respectable career as a writer and producer for **Sam & Dave**, **Betty Wright**, **Bobby Byrd** and others in the '60s and '70s. But in 1971 he adopted his masked alter ego to make super-rude R&B parodies including Shitting On The Dock of The Bay and Spermy Night In Georgia. More than 20 similarly X-rated albums followed – including *Blowfly's Punk Rock Party*, released on **Jello Biafra**'s Alternative Tentacles label – some of which would be sampled by hip hoppers including the **Wu-Tang Clan**, **Big Daddy Kane** and **DJ Shadow**. The film The Weird World Of Blowfly was unveiled in 2010.

SINGER **SIGNE ANDERSON** (b.1941) was the original vocalist with the **Jefferson Airplane**, appearing on 1966's *Jefferson Airplane Takes Off* LP. Her last show with the group, at the Fillmore in October 1966, was released in 2010 as *Signe's Farewell*. She later sang with **Carl Smith And The Natural Gas Company**, and made guest performances with her old band. She died on January 28, the same day as Airplane co-founder **Paul Kantner**.

DRUMMER **'FAST' EDDIE HOH** (b.1944) was a member of the **Modern Folk Quartet** before becoming a session musician in the second half of the '60s: among his many credits were **Donovan**'s *Sunshine Superman*, touring in the road band of **The Mamas And The Papas** (including their appearance at Monterey Pop), **Tim Buckley**'s *Goodbye And Hello*, **The Monkees**' Daydream Believer and Pleasant Valley Sunday and the **Mike Bloomfield**/**Al Kooper**/**Steven Stills** album *Super Session*. He also played with **Charlie Musselwhite**, **Graham Bond** and **Gram Parsons**.

FILM-MAKER **STEVE GEBHARDT** (b.1937) directed **John Lennon** films including Imagine and Live In New York City, and was cinematographer on **Yoko Ono**'s films Fly and Freedom. He also directed Twenty To Life: The Life And Times Of **John Sinclair**, produced the documentary **Bill Monroe** – The Father Of Bluegrass Music and was cinematographer on the concert movie Ladies & Gentlemen: **The Rolling Stones**.

Clive Prior

In the mood for lewd: Blowfly, grand vizier

Getty Images (3), John Twomey, Mirrorpix

THE MOJO INTERVIEW

The elegant, **melancholy** voice of **Everything But The Girl**, **Tracey Thorn** quit pop to **raise a family**, then revisited her career in **two acclaimed books**. “There were a lot of **churning emotions**,” she says. “**Singing let them out**.”

Interview by **ANDREW MALE** • Portrait by **TOM SHEEHAN**

“THE THING ABOUT WRITING A BOOK,” says Tracey Thorn, “is that once you’ve said all that stuff there’s no taking it back. You sort of throw the curtains open and destroy a bit of the mystery.”

We’re sitting in the utilitarian offices of Buzzin’ Fly, centre of operations for Thorn and her husband Ben Watt following the couple’s 1999 decision to mothball Everything But The Girl – the vocal group they formed after meeting at Hull University in 1982 – and raise a family. In the 17 years since their dissolution it’s arguable that the pair have accrued a little more mystery, while their reputation – as pioneers of the jazz-inflected post-punk paradigm that quietly infiltrated the mid-’80s pop charts, and, more recently, as authors of thoughtful and significant memoirs – has matured.

Thorn is warm and funny when discussing her widely-enjoyed 2013 autobiography Bedsit Disco Queen and her more recent 2015 disquisition on the art of singing, Naked At The Albert Hall. In fact the mood is cosily collegiate, thanks in part to the university-office feel of this small, ordered east London eyrie – kettle, desk, phone, table and four chairs, and rows of functional shelving units containing a fair few records (EBTG best ofs, 12-inch singles from Watt’s post-band life as a DJ and label owner, recent Tracey Thorn and Ben Watt solo LPs) and a whole load of books. Alongside hardbacks and paperbacks of Thorn’s two best-sellers are copies of her husband’s own 2014 family memoir, Romany And Tom, and Patient, his 1996 account of battling Churg-Strauss syndrome, the rare autoimmune disease that derailed the band and nearly killed him, and also the unlikely spur behind EBTG’s mid-’90s reinvention as purveyors of exquisite electronic melancholy.

But there’s also a caution at the edge of Thorn’s voice, in how she answers “no” to certain questions, silent movie-star eyes scrutinising from behind dark geometric fringe. It’s a note of distance that will come as no surprise to anyone who fell for her lonely dolorous tones on such early EBTG albums as *Eden*, *Love Not Money* and *Baby, The Stars Shine Bright*, or heard that aching introspective whisper beneath throbbing electronics on such mid-’90s radio hits as Missing and Massive Attack’s Protection or dissecting marital breakdown and teenage despair on her more recent solo LPs, a mix of the cautionary and confessional that sits at the heart of her best work. “Yeah,” says Thorn. “Why did I become a singer at all if it’s so difficult? But it’s precisely because you’re a sensitive emotional person you need to sing, but because you’re sensitive and emotional you find it really difficult. I tried to present a really controlled front to the world yet there were lots of emotions churning underneath. Singing was a way of letting that out.” ➢

WE’RE NOT WORTHY

Robert Forster: “Tracey has zero artifice, plenty of art”.

“Tracey is natural and intelligent – unusual qualities to have near the music business, perhaps it’s why she has kept it at arm’s length. She has a fabulous voice, and fine lyrics that flow from her with zero artifice, but plenty of art. One thing a little lost in this exchange is how funny and hip she is.”

Stephen Booth

You grew up in Hertfordshire. Your dad worked as an accountant, your mum raised the kids. You write in Bedsit Disco Queen that you had special status as the youngest in the family. How did that manifest itself?

Being the youngest you were quite indulged. I was allowed to be picky with my food and I did well at school and was made to feel particularly clever, but as I got older I began to be suspicious of that and think that my parents were vastly overrating my cleverness. It was sort of a blessing and a curse. You start to worry that you've got to live up to that.

You write beautifully in both books about singing. When did you first notice the sound of your own singing voice?

It would have definitely been in private. In the early days, the notion of singing in front of people was really excruciating and yet I was singing in my bedroom at home. So there were moments where I was playing the guitar and writing songs and thinking, "This does sound really nice." In my head I could tell that I liked what I was hearing but I just didn't trust that other people would think that and wasn't sure that I could do it in front of other people.

You kept a diary and you kept all your gig tickets. Was there a part of you that thought, "This is for posterity. I will be someone."

I don't think so. It think it was to impose order. And I think, as a teenager, that sense of life spiralling out of control scared me a bit and I think that by writing things down I could get a handle on it.

First hearing Patti Smith's *Horses* is integral to your development as a singer. Your description of her voice in Naked At The Albert Hall is quite sensual…

Yeah. I was trying to convey how it affected me then. Because when you hear a voice and you're really struck by it there is something physical happening. I also wrote about Patti Smith in Bedsit Disco Queen almost in a sort of slightly humorous way saying, "Oh, how hilarious I wanted to be Patti Smith." Yet when I came to write about it again for the second book I thought there is a sort of logic to it and when I got *Horses* out again and sang along to it there was that light-bulb moment of me going "But you sing in *exactly* the same range as her!" So although I couldn't be Patti Smith there was a time when I sang along with that record and my voice did fit perfectly, even if only in private.

Do you ever wonder if your voice would have sounded different if punk had never happened – if you'd just had, say, Olivia Newton-John and Karen Carpenter as your reference points?

Yes. It's really hard to describe, especially if you weren't there at the time, but just conceptually punk changed everything in my head and what came immediately after even more so, people making records themselves, and that sense that the people who were suddenly making records were not conventional singers and performers. Perhaps that more than anything was precisely the thing that spoke to me. OK, in retrospect I know how much Karen Carpenter agonised about her appearance, but on the surface she looked like the perfect performer, and I would have looked at her and thought, "I can't be that, I'm all edges and angst and worry." But lots of people in the punk and indie scene made you think it was all right to be all edges and angst and worry.

The early work you did with the Marine Girls, and your first solo album, *A Distant Shore*, were heavily influential, yet in Bedsit Disco Queen you're quite dismissive of the "shambling jumble-sale pop" that came in its wake. You call it "a parody".

It's partly an age thing. Those records that we made when we were really young, I'm still really proud of them but I didn't think they could be a template of what bands should aspire to for their entire musical career. I got really bored with that really quickly. Ugh! It put my teeth on edge.

You're happier with the Marine Girls being an influence on Kurt Cobain…

Yeah, because I love that side of Kurt Cobain. Far from being this rock hero, he was such a champion of women in music, and genuine outsiders. People who really didn't fit. Proper square pegs.

When you arrived at Hull University, even before you meet Ben Watt, you'd already made one LP with the Marine Girls. Were you considered dead exotic?

Yes, a bit. There was that weird period where the Marine Girls were on the cover of the Melody Maker and Single Of the Week in the NME and, yes, it was a bit strange but, as you do when you're young, you just take everything in your stride. It didn't feel like it was a career, though. It felt like it was just something you did, and the NME and Melody Maker felt like glorified fanzines, who wrote about people who made records at our sort of level, and that felt right and proper. I didn't think they should be writing about people who were in the charts.

Which kind of makes that shift all the more surprising when you and Ben realise that the first EBTG album, *Eden*, is coming out on an 'indie' label, Blanco Y Negro, which is financed by a major, WEA.

Yes. Up to that point we'd only ever met people like [Cherry Red's] Mike Alway and [Rough Trade's] Geoff Travis. Then suddenly we're in a boardroom on Kensington High Street. Completely different language. The implication was that we were protected because Blanco was supposed to be this ideal scenario, an indie with all the money of a major. Hahaha! How we laugh now. But of

A LIFE IN PICTURES

The girl and everything: Tracey in focus.

1 Toddlin' Tracey: a young Thorn grows, in the family's garden, Brookmans Park near Hatfield, 1964.

2 Waiting for Eden: post-punk Tracey and Ben Watt, early 1980s. "People who were making records were not conventional singers."

3 Thorn pares it down: her band had become "a little rock group with these big songs to sing," she says.

4 All aboard! Tracey, far left, with Marine Girls Jane Fox (centre) and Gina Hartman, Regent's Park lake, London, 1982.

5 Paris match: Ben, Tracey and (far right) Paul Weller of The Style Council share the stage, January 1983.

6 Glitterati to literati: now a feted writer, Tracey rubs shoulders with author Nick Hornby at a book launch, London, September 2014.

7 Thorny topics: Tracey celebrates the publication of her first book, February 2013.

8 Protection racket: Tracey with Massive Attack, July 2, 1995. "I understand this completely. This is minimalism. I do minimalism. I get it."

9 Tracey outside the London School Of Economics, May 1983: "Maybe our songs always sound too personal – they still belong to us, in some way."

Courtesy of Tracey Thorn, Getty Images (5), Rex Features, Photoshot (2)

course the people putting the money in wanted to have influence and we were just completely unprepared for it. I'm a bit harsh on those people in Bedsit Disco Queen and in some ways it wasn't their fault. They were just doing what a major label does and we'd sort of signed on the dotted line without quite realising we were signing on the dotted line. It was really awkward, for quite a long time.

I remember seeing you live around the time of *Love Not Money*. You had that whole Morrissey look down, which I just assumed was some '80s indie scene 'look'. It was nice to read in Bedsit Disco Queen what a huge Smiths fan you actually were…

For a year of my life they were the best band ever and I really did have that passionate feeling about them. They were unique. Every now and then you get a group that just stands head and shoulders above everyone else. One of those classic groups where you didn't even know that was what you wanted until they showed it to you.

And all those Morrissey moves in the early EBTG videos…

Oh God, yes. I was *desperately* trying to be Morrissey. Now, the older me can look back and go, "Oh my God!" It's so obvious, but it was just pouring out of me.

One of the biggest laughs in Bedsit Disco Queen is where you tell Smash Hits that the last book you'd read was The British In Northern Ireland: The Case For Withdrawal. But do you ever wish you'd had more fun with that whole pop star thing?

Well, yes, but it's almost like wishing you were a different person. I did meet people from that era who were more at ease with spending their money, being egotistical… we were awkward with all of that. Classic middle-class liberals, intensely uncomfortable with the way that might be perceived. We just took it all too seriously, but how could we not?

What was behind the sudden change of image and sound with the big, '60s-style productions on *Baby, The Stars Shine Bright*?

We always really felt that if you did exactly the same thing again as you had on your last record that people would point and stare and be very bored. We were completely wrong about that and it wasn't until much later that we looked back and saw other people who'd ploughed the same furrow for many years and become much more successful. For some reason we convinced ourselves that it was really important to come up with a new idea, a new concept. We made a bunch of interesting albums out of that but I can see why it made it really awkward for people to know where we fit. We made it difficult for ourselves, but on the other hand, we kept it interesting as well. Maybe we would have been more successful if we'd made a version of *Love Not Money* six or seven times but we'd have just been bored.

"I was desperately **trying to be Morrissey**. The older me can look back and go, **'It's so obvious!'**"

After those first two records you learned how easily you could lose your voice in a live setting. Did that change your way of singing?

On both those records I was really going for it. *Baby, The Stars…* was really difficult. It had an orchestra and we only did two gigs with the orchestra and the rest of the time we were touring this orchestral record with a little rock group, with these big songs to sing, trying to be a belter rather than the early whisper-in-your-ear crooner which is where I'd started. So I think that was what then led on to *Idlewild*: let's pare it all down. And each of those changes came about because there was a moment when we thought, "Oh my God, that didn't really work, did it? Let's try *this*."

***Idlewild* felt like a very intimate, personal record. Did the industry of EBTG ever intrude on the relationship between you and Ben?**

I don't think so. Obviously, it is strange, being a couple and writing personal lyrics, but because both of us are songwriters, we sort of just took it as read that that's what you do, write it down. So even if there might be a moment where you go "You said that in a song!", you just move on. We've never questioned one another's songs and nor have any songs ever led to us saying, "We'd better have a conversation about this."

You changed direction again with the '80s soul sound of *Language Of Life*. In Bedsit Disco Queen you talk about "the safety net becoming the trap". Was this a constant fear?

Part of it was to do with not being in a band. We didn't have a lead guitarist whose sound was integral to what we did. We were just two singer-songwriters who had to come up with a concept and a backing band for each album. I can see how there might have been a different version of our career, especially from 1988 after we had a hit with I Don't Want To Talk About it, where we could have become a very cosy version of ourselves

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TRACEY THORN
BEDSIT DISCO QUEEN

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"We fall between the gaps. For some people, that's precisely what they like about us": Tracey Thorn, in her Clerkenwell, London eyrie, Tuesday, December 1, 2015.

> "**Massive Attack** kept everything under wraps. It was always hard to know **whether they liked what I'd done**."

where we wrote nice, comfortably arranged songs. We might have ended up being really successful but I think we'd have been really miserable.

But by the time of your next album, *Worldwide*, it does seem like you're in this hermetically-sealed world…

We did start to feel trapped around that time. I think *Worldwide* is our worst record. I got a bit personally isolated around that time because of not meeting lots of other women in the music business. I was leading this life inside a bubble, travelling all the time. On tour everyone was male, the musicians, the crew, the people doing sound, and I started to lose touch with the people I knew outside of music. Maybe that's another reason *Worldwide* sounds so disconnected and why I don't much like listening to it. *Brrr*!

Given what a low point you were at with EBTG, when Ben first became unwell did you first think his illness might be work or band related?

No. No.

He was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease, Churg-Strauss syndrome. Did the isolation and the mental steeliness you'd developed on the road help you cope with Ben's illness in any way?

That's a hard one. I had become a bit isolated and I did cope with the time of Ben being in hospital in quite an isolated way. I just rolled up my sleeves and got on with it. If it happened now my immediate instinct would be to get in touch with all sorts of other people and ask for help, but I really did deal with it in a very solitary fashion. Did it help? No. We coped, but it wasn't any fun. While he was in hospital we were adamant to keep press and speculation away and then afterward we kept our heads down at home, recovering. After that, Ben was possessed with this manic fervour to get straight back to work. He would have been in the studio the next day if he could have. He just kind of came out saying, "I've seen the light, now I know what we must do."

In Bedsit Disco Queen, you're very aware of how the ordeal of Ben's illness radically changed the direction of EBTG's music…

Well it did change us, definitely. Although the change wasn't immediate, we had much more of a sense of "Oh, what the fuck!" about things after that. *Amplified Heart* was a much more raw record, just emotionally. If *Worldwide* was still the sound of people trying to cleverly order problematic emotions and sort them all out neatly, with *Amplified Heart* we just went "Bleurrgh!" and let it all out. It's impossible to know what would have happened to us without that but there's no question that it changed us.

There's a weird energy to the cover of *Amplified Heart*. You're both showing off how skinny you are. You both look very cool, yet it's a skinniness that results from near death, deep worry, pain, stress… Were you both aware of what you were doing?

Yes. You do go slightly mad in the aftermath of something traumatic. It was also partly the times, in modelling and fashion there was the whole Kate Moss heroin chic thing going on, people photographed looking a bit skinny and ill in their underwear. We kind of thought, "That's exactly what we look like right now. What the hell, let's do it." It was in that spirit of defiance, when something really awful's happened to you and you've got two choices: you either pretend everything's fine or you go, "I'm going to show you my scars."

You're very funny in Bedsit Disco Queen about receiving the tape of the Protection backing track from Massive Attack around this time, and how there seemed to be almost nothing to it. It seems as if this was quite a cleansing experience. A real stripping out.

I remember competing feelings. On the one hand, "I don't understand this at all." On the other hand, "I understand this completely. This is minimalism. I do minimalism. I get it." And yet, it was being done in such a different format I had to listen to it maybe 10 times with

Tom Sheehan

complete bewilderment before I suddenly went, "Oh, I know how to do this." No one in Massive Attack ever said a word to me about what they wanted or why I was there. The most I ever got was that Nellee [Hooper], who was producing the record, had produced Björk and Björk was a big *Distant Shore* fan. I think that's the connection. Massive Attack kept everything under wraps. It was always a little hard to know whether they liked what I'd done. I did get the feeling that Mushroom especially was a little bit suspicious of why I was there. I think Protection was one of his tracks. I'm not sure he was ever convinced.

You read about that mid-'90s period now as the time of Oasis and Blur and Britpop. That must be really odd for you, because your '90s were part of that rich world of British electronic music: Massive Attack, Tricky, Portishead…

Yes, it's very weird. Even at the time, people were saying, "Oh, this Britpop thing is all just nostalgia." It was a time when British electronica and dance was incredibly successful and winning BRITS and people seem to have forgotten that. I was really proud and incredibly fortunate to be part of a really progressive moment in British music. It also felt like, because of our indie roots, there but for the grace of God…

1996's *Walking Wounded* was a huge success. How do you think you might have coped if *Baby, The Stars Shine Bright* had been your million-selling album?

I don't know. Our career is such a weird shape. We had our big success with *Amplified Heart* and *Walking Wounded* and then I more or less stopped. Which was perfect for me because I was ready to stop. Also, I've honestly never thought about this because, at the time we weren't thinking, "I wish these records were selling more copies." It's easy to forget how well everyone did. We'd cut our arms off now to sell what you sold back then with no hit singles. So, even though I might say, "Ooh, the record company were a bit frustrated with us," there was no question anyone was going to drop us because we were selling 200,000 records. You didn't worry about selling a million because you didn't need to.

TRACEYISLAND

Four key LPs from the Thorn of plenty. By **Andrew Male**.

EARLY SOLO

Tracey Thorn
A Distant Shore
(CHERRY RED, 1982)
★★★★

Originally recorded in a friend's shed for £167, this raw collection of demos, intended for the next Marine Girls LP, became the minimalist blueprint for all future Thorn recordings, introspective melancholy, with her desolate vocals somehow simultaneously mournful and heartening.

EARLY EBTG

Everything But The Girl
Eden
(BLANCO Y NEGRO, 1984)
★★★★★

Sitting awkwardly yet perfectly between early '80s smooth jazz cool and new quiet edginess, this is essentially a set of teenage punk lyrics arranged for a small electric jazz combo, with Thorn and Ben Watt meshing styles and laying down the minimalist anti-rock rules with Charles Hayward of This Heat and Weekend's Simon Booth.

LATE EBTG

Everything But The Girl
Amplified Heart
(BLANCO Y NEGRO, 1994)
★★★★

The outpouring of raw lyrics that followed Watt's recovery from Churg-Strauss syndrome, married to another unlikely union of styles; the stripped acoustic folk arrangements of Danny Thompson and Dave Mattacks brilliantly interlaced with the breakbeats and thrubbing analogue pop rhythms of Spring Heel Jack's John Coxon.

LATE SOLO

Tracey Thorn
Love And Its Opposite
(STRANGE FEELING, 2010)
★★★★

TRACEY THORN
LOVE AND ITS OPPOSITE

Both this and Thorn's beautiful 2015 soundtrack for Carol Morley's unsettling '60s school drama, The Falling, return to the ghosts, memories and characters and dreams of her 1982 solo debut, *A Distant Shore*, from the blasted landscape of middle-age. Interested parties should check out the juxtaposition of old and new tracks on Thorn's 2015 best-of compilation, *Solo*.

What, if anything, did you miss about that life when you were away from it, raising your family?

I was really happy to stop. There was a funny six-month period when we tried to do both, when we made *Temperamental*. I dumped all the press on Ben and we did a handful of gigs which I found really difficult and I thought, "No, I really do need to stop completely because I'm saying no to things and I'm being a bore."

You described your return to music with Damage [with German tech-house team Tiefschwarz] in 2006 as "the perfect antidote to midlife melancholy". Was there a midlife melancholy there?

Well I think after a few years I did get to the point of thinking, "Am I really not going to do anything ever again?", but really without much motivation to do anything about it, which is really why it was quite lucky for me that Tiefschwarz offered me a chance to just have a day out singing, and that sort of kick-started the idea that maybe I could do something more.

Did you notice a shift in your songwriting on your return?

Not totally. On *Out Of The Woods* [2007] there were lots of different approaches, a bit of this and a bit of that, which I was quite proud of. *Love And Its Opposite* [2010] had a much clearer line through, a bunch of songs from the perspective of a woman of my age, more of a piece than on *Out Of The Woods* where they were more scattered.

There's a real short story quality to the songs on *Love And Its Opposite*. You've now written two books. Are there any short stories or pieces of fiction hidden away?

Not a line, no. In a burst of enthusiasm one day I created a folder on my desktop called 'Writing Ideas'. Every now and then I have a look at it and see what's in there. There is *nothing* in there. I just literally never have an idea for an original story.

Are you still asked about making another EBTG album?

Yes, I was asked last night.

What is your answer?

Very unlikely. We're both so busy and happy with what we *are* doing.

Looking back, do you think EBTG made the solid gold for-the-ages LP they should have?

If I'm being brutally honest, I think perhaps we didn't. *Eden* definitely made an impact. It was part of something, but it was something quite fleeting, so perhaps when people write the history of music, there was no record that propelled us into the mainstream or that fits in the authorised history. We fall between the gaps. For some people, that's precisely what they like about us. I think we would have been rubbish at fitting in.

Are you surprised that your songs don't get covered more?

Yes. Yes I am. I think there's songs out there, good songs, songs on *Baby, The Stars*… that would sound fantastic. But there are some songwriters who write songs that take on a sort of timeless universal quality and those songs get covered because people can come at them from all sorts of different directions and think, "Ooh, I can connect to that." Maybe ours always sound too personal. Maybe they still belong to us, in some way.

Tracey Thorn's album Solo: Songs And Collaborations 1982-2015 is out now on Caroline International; her memoir Naked At The Albert Hall is out on paperback on March 3.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

FIELD MUSIC
Commontime

Out of a gorse-tangled, prog-pop wilderness where Kate Bush, Debussy and Gentle Giant roam free, emerge Wearside's ELD MUSIC, still humping their own gear but refuelled with funk and endorsed by Purple Royalty. "We've seen plenty of bands turn up in two tour buses," they tell EN MYERS, "but they're gone now."

Photography by NDREW COTTERILL.

PITCHED HIGH UP IN THE CALDER VALLEY, surrounded by the Pennine moorlands made famous by the Brontës, Hebden Bridge prides itself on being a last bastion of alternative thinking. Here, big business is being challenged; most shops are fiercely independent and the population is a mix of ageing hippies, ex-punks, poets, activists and deeply-rooted old West Riding families. The town has a radical, do-it-yourself attitude. After recent devastating floods there was little whingeing, no relying on government. Everyone mucked in.

Peter and David Brewis, the brothers who constitute the band Field Music, step through evidence of the recent inundation, dodging stagnant puddles of river silt and trying not to slip on Market Street's slick flagstones. Tonight they will play the town's Trades Club – established by the local Labour Party in 1923 and still run by committee – kicking off the campaign for new album *Commontime* four years after the release of their Mercury-nominated *Plumb*. Free-thinking Hebden Bridge and the industrious, self-contained Sunderland band seem well-suited, although there are indications that, over a decade since their debut, the wider world is finally catching up with the latter. Witness the reaction to the oddball funk of lead-off track The Noisy Days Are Over, a song that Prince tweeted his love for on the day it was released.

"That was strange," says Peter Brewis, over clinking pots of tea and a shared flapjack in the Old Gate pub, just off Hebden Bridge's arterial Market Street. "We suspect a friend of his heard the track and passed it on: 'Check out this weird English band – they've done a little Prince ➢

The Moors the merrier: Peter (left) and David Brewis contemplate the possibility of having fun, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, Friday, January 22, 2016.

Field Music (from left) Peter, Liz Corney, Kev Dosdale, David, Andrew Lowther; (right) David; (below) Beyoncé, someone to draw on; (bottom) David and Peter get things started, 1990.

FIELD MUSIC / PLUMB

≺ thing at the end.' It's amazing really, because realistically how many record shops in Minnesota stock Field Music?"

"First Prince, then the world – and about bloody time," deadpans younger brother David. "We are the slowest-burning band in pop history. Even in Sunderland just the other day, when I was attempting to buy some insurance, I had a woman say how nice it was to see a new local band getting exposure. I was, like, *really*? Because honestly, I'm so old I can't even remember my age any more."

POP MUSIC HAS BEEN THE PULSE-BEAT OF Field Music since the brothers wrote their first song – a ditty entitled What's The Pie Doing In The Sky? – aged four and two, but it's pop whose architecture is prog's complexity. The pair are perennially pegged as cerebral sorts, yet litter today's conversation with references to heartier early interests such as The Black Crowes, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Queen – "A Brewis family fancy dress party always involves at least three different era Freddie Mercurys," beams Peter. More recent enthusiasms include Justin Timberlake. Field Music make music writhing with contradictions: precise and economical one minute, baroque and lavish the next. Juxtaposition is key and *Commontime*'s square peg pop is as much Pharrell Williams as Alan Parsons Project.

"We grew up with the idea of the 'classic album'," says Peter. "*Pet Sounds* or whatever. We'd read books about them, and would think if we don't make the best album in the world ever, we've failed."

"And long we may continue to do so," adds David. "Because only an insane person would suggest they've made the perfect album; if you think you've nailed it then you're a narcissist or a psychopath."

The Brewises talk of their renewed commitment to making pop "without being sniffy about it".

"Stock, Aitken & Waterman was my introduction to music, and I loved it," says Peter. "Then David got *Bad* and a black fedora for Christmas one year; he was sort of a budget Michael Jackson. We can discuss Gentle Giant or Steely Dan all day but we're just as likely to listen to something like Single Ladies by Beyoncé. That song's odd on every level. With Field Music we try to draw on that underlying pop weirdness."

Dig deeper into Field Music's catalogue and you'll hear debts to Thelonious Monk, even Debussy. It's a singular brew, but one whose influence can now be heard in younger – often more visible – bands.

"Oh, do you reckon?" says Peter, surprised.

"Some bands like Dutch Uncles would come to see us play and Everything Everything gigged round our way a lot," says David. "They were kids starting out but I think they're equally as influenced by The Futureheads, who Pete played in, and who also inspired us massively. I do remember hearing some later Bloc Party and a few other bands and thinking, They've nicked our drum beat."

Beside him his brother laughs.

"That's probably what Prince says about us, Dave."

THE OTHER STRAND OF FIELD MUSIC'S enduring career narrative is the DIY ethic. Five studio albums, four solo works and one film soundtrack in and they're still driving their own van, humping gear up dank stairwells, and part-managing themselves. Though this hands-on approach appears quaint, it is, in fact, realistic: a sustainable business model for the post record industry-era that safeguards the Brewises's autonomy. It's certainly chiming with the enthusiastic crowd milling outside tonight's sold-out venue.

In conversation the Brewises wear their hearts on their sleeves, but it's fair to say their music has not always been so direct, and some critics have expressed exasperation with their lyrical abstractions and mathematical song structures. Too academic, austere. Yet with *Commontime* they appear to be entering a new phase, embracing instinct and optimism. They're starting to let go. "We're adults now," shrugs Peter. "Whereas I guess some other

"SINGLE LADIES BY BEYONCÉ IS ODD ON EVERY LEVEL. WITH FIELD MUSIC WE TRY TO DRAW ON THAT UNDERLYING POP WEIRDNESS."

Renouncing "that whole rock star thing": Field Music, Trades Club, Hebden Bridge, January 2016; (left) Peter; (below) David, Peter and Andrew Moore in Honest Boy, 1995; (bottom) new fan Prince.

bands aren't. Or they'll have fun for three years, then it falls apart. Content-wise we have always tried to avoid cliché but on this new album I've used the word 'baby' in a song for the first ever time. I'm allowed to now I'm a dad."

Backstage at the Trades Club, where out front the audience numbers underage-looking kids, prog heads, urbane hipsters and number one fan, ex-Fall man and BBC6Music DJ Marc Riley, Field Music are munching carrot sticks and doing vocal warm-ups, mellifluously chanting "Sally saw Sylvester stacking silver saucers side by side" in strong Sunderland accents. There's just time to reflect on a theory that MOJO has posited: that Field Music remain the most creatively free band in Britain.

"Obviously I'd love to play to really big venues, wish everyone was getting paid more and that all we had to do was step on stage," says David, his guitar strapped on. "But at what price? I don't know what we would have to lose to get to that level and I'm not sure I would like that. We've seen plenty of bands turn up in two tour buses, but they're gone now."

"For us to keep taking our lily-livered version of musical risks we have to keep taking the commercial risks," adds Peter. "That whole rock star thing was always beyond us. As a kid it never occurred to us that Led Zeppelin actually employed people to do the heavy lifting."

Staying in the north-east – David in Sunderland, Peter in Newcastle – has curbed any potential rock star nonsense and underwritten the band's durability. Sunderland will not tolerate pretentiousness. "We're not remotely 'rock' or flamboyant," says David, "but I'd argue our arrangements and how we play are actually completely Led Zeppelin. Football strips, laddish chants and a bit of strutting is the only rock star behaviour that Sunderland finds acceptable. The Liam Gallagher thing – thanks mate. Oasis were of no interest to us, but it was something to work against."

It's also a place that, they merrily point out, is as cheap as chips, allowing them to maintain their own studio. Here the brothers Brewis are figureheads for a localised scene, dusting other artists' work with their own production magic.

"Festivals were the only time we'd cross paths with much bigger bands beyond our world," explains David. "Early on we'd turn up in our dad's estate car and stage crews would laugh at us: 'Where's the band? Where's your gear?'"

"We're here, mate," says Peter. "Check out me dad's Mondeo."

FIELD MUSIC HAVE ALWAYS HAD A strong sense of the right and wrong way to be a band; few decisions, whether creative, aesthetic or business, seem flippant. A previous group of theirs even drew a list of rules that the Brewises taped to the inside of their wardrobe. "It had stuff like, 'You must drink four cups of coffee before playing,' and, 'Everyone must sing, all the time,'" remembers David. "One rule just said, 'Digital echo'."

"It was like [Brian Eno's] Oblique Strategies," says Peter. "For example, a concept doesn't have to make sense, but it makes sense to have a concept. So on *Commontime* I might play a guitar solo as someone else, or we'll use two drum kits simultaneously. It's a framework that makes decision-making easier. There's a lot of me and Dave singing round a microphone, just so we could have fun."

Fun. Isn't that the very reason most people form bands in the first place? Here the brothers pause. David breaks the silence.

"Aye, actually," he nods, as if considering the concept of 'fun' for the first time. "I think it is. And we are."

POP LIFE

Five things Field Music learned from **PRINCE**. Compiled by **DAVID BREWIS**.

TELL ME KEEP ME

(from Field Music, 2005)

The eponymous debut album's schizo abutment of tenor guitar grooving with delicately layered chamber pop. "An example of trying to emulate the feel of the acoustic guitar in Take Me With U," admits David Brewis. "Sometimes it feels like the perfect arrangement trick to have this come in halfway through a verse."

IN CONTEXT

(from Tones Of Town, 2007)

Sophisto highlight of FM's life-in-a-day song cycle. "It's based for the most part on a 4-bar loop of drum/percussion samples *à la* When Doves Cry or Raspberry Beret," says David. "Things can get extra interesting when you overlay real drums so it feels like the loop is constantly shifting."

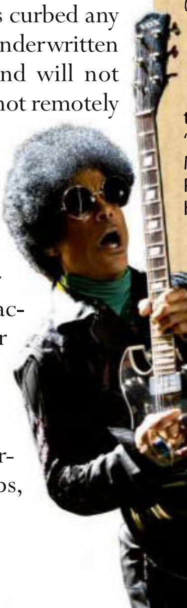
SUITS US BETTER

(from Old Fears, by School Of Language, 2014)

Brewis Jr remembers meeting his wife, in falsetto, with backing of sampled mouth music. "There's something to the melody and the feel of this one which makes me think I must have been subconsciously aiming for one of Prince's sultry ballads, like Forever In My Life or The Ballad Of Dorothy Parker."

THE NOISY DAYS ARE OVER

(from Commontime, 2016)



The super-catchy tune (plus key-change-tastic jazz-pop coda) that prompted Prince's tweet. "The outro nods in the direction of three or four tracks from *Parade*," reveals David, "including Life Can Be So Nice, Mountains and Christopher Tracey's Parade. And the percussion throughout has a touch of New Position."

DISAPPOINTED

(from Commontime, 2016)

More mid-'80s jazz-soul-pop vibes, like The Crusaders or Level 42 went indie, but even better than that sounds. "When we came to do the chorus vocals, our intention was to make it sound like Wendy & Lisa maybe, with Prince singing along slightly buried in the mix."

Andrew Cotterill (4), Rex (2), Courtesy of Field Music (2)

BROTHER *FROM* ANOTHER PLANET

DAVE DAVIES HAS SURVIVED CRACK-UPS, A STROKE AND OVER 50 FRACTIOUS YEARS IN AND OUT OF **THE KINKS** WITH HIS BROTHER RAY. HIS SECRET? A NEW SPIRITUAL SELF, CEREMONIAL MAGIC, AND ALIEN VISITATIONS. "BEING ALIVE IS FASCINATING," HE TELLS **MARK PAYTRESS**

Portrait by DEZO HOFFMANN

"I like anything that confuses the conscious mind. I think that's why we got rock'n'roll in the first place." Dave Davies luxuriates in group and solo success, 1968.

"Everything was hormones and heightened emotions:" Dave Davies and admirers at the time of Death Of A Clown, 1967.

DAVE DAVIES IS STANDING OUTSIDE 87 Fortis Green, the big old Regency house in north London bought by his brother Ray in 1965 on the proceeds of the group's early success. He grins, turns to face me and says, "How lucky we are to be in a band like The Kinks."

You'd be forgiven for thinking Dave means the riches and fame, women, free pints and a pat on the back in every Muswell Hill boozer. He doesn't. "In The Kinks," he says approvingly, "you always get brought down to earth with a big thump."

It's a mild late-winter morning and Dave's recently back from touring the States. Since suffering a stroke in 2004, his slow but full recovery has allowed for plenty of studio activity but few personal appearances.

"It's good to be back," says the man in the black overcoat, an impeccable trilby and royally patterned cravat. His hair, long in the back, smoothed flat on top, looks faintly villainous, albeit in a benign, bohemian way. Three hours fly by. He's easy company.

We leave Ray's Swinging '60s hideaway, the house where The Kinks worked up songs like Sunny Afternoon, Waterloo Sunset and Days, and turn eastwards towards Muswell Hill. As we walk, Dave continues his original 'big thump' theme. "Have you seen Mr Turner?" he asks, referring to Mike Leigh's 2014 biopic of the 19th century British painter. "There's this scene where Turner hears the critics mocking his work. They say his paintings look like custard pie fights. I can relate to that. The Kinks were often out of fashion."

After a further few minutes of strolling, Dave stops outside a terraced house, set back from the main Fortis Green drag. We've arrived at 6 Denmark Terrace, the old Davies family home. "It's posh now," Dave says. "Got a shower 'n' everything." He had a nose round when he and Ray returned last year after the death of their sister Rose. In her honour, they planted a rose bush in the back garden. It had been Ray's idea.

> "IT WAS JUST *PURE INSTINCT,* RAGE & EMOTION. I'VE ALWAYS LIKED GETTING MY HANDS DIRTY. IF IT FELT RIGHT, IT *WAS RIGHT*."

"That's the famous front room," says Dave, nodding towards a modest three-window bay. There, in March 1964, a lean and mean Dave Davies, just 17, plugged his Harmony Meteor guitar into the small 10-watt Elpico amp he'd bought from Ted Davies – no relation – at the radio spares shop three doors down. What he did next was pure rock revolution.

Ray's original You Really Got Me riff, banged out on the family's "perfectly out-of-tune" upright piano, had sounded more like a politely moody, Gerry Mulligan-style sax hook. It wasn't very Dave at all. Taking a razor blade to the Elpico's speaker cone, he plugged back in, giving the riff some extra staccato.

DENMARK TERRACE
ELPICO

Dave with the Harmony Meteor guitar and (inset) the green Elpico amp used on the 1964 classic You Really Got Me; (right) the Davies family home, Denmark Terrace, London N2.

The ensuing soundcloud of buzz and vibrato shook the curtains. "It was just pure instinct, rage and emotion," says Dave. "I've always liked getting my hands dirty. If it felt right, it was right."

You Really Got Me, and its sexed up successor, All Day And All Of The Night, were gamechangers – for The Kinks and for the entire beat era. It killed off Merseybeat, threw down a challenge to The Rolling Stones, and handed The Who an instruction manual.

In pure historical terms, Dave's unprecedented eruption of electrically charged vio-

Rex Features, courtesy of Phil Smee

PYE
YOU REALLY GOT ME
THE KINKS

lence (and his solos were wilder still) joins hands with Link Wray's Rumble and Jimi Hendrix's total sonic attack. It's arguable that either has enjoyed anything like the enduring influence of You Really Got Me.

Famously, Dave's birth, on February 3, 1947, induced a lifetime's resentment in his elder brother. The youngest Davies had no such antipathy. "I didn't feel in competition with him at all," he says plaintively. "Maybe Ray had more problems with the brother thing than I did. I didn't know what sibling rivalry was until I was 25."

Music aside, the brothers did have one thing in common: competitive sports. "We were both keen on football, and were both pretty good boxers," he says. Gloves off, it was a different matter. Noticing that Ray had soft hands, the boy's father Fred took Dave aside one day, telling him to be strong for his big brother. "I'm not sure I fully understood it at the time," says Dave. "Years later, I found out that the older brother-younger sibling role-reversal thing happens a lot."

Dave breaks into a verse from Front Room, a song on his most recent album, *Rippin' Up Time*: "Looking back/When I was just a lad/In Denmark Terrace/That funny little house…" Later, he'll insist he always fought against The Kinks' tendency towards nostalgia.

"As a small kid, I remember all the emotions banging around these walls," he says. "There was a lot of shouting, a lot of laughter and a lot of crying." Mostly, he recalls a lot of love. You can hear the gratitude in his voice, now a more fragile version of that yearning, impassioned soprano heard on so many classic Kinks flip-sides.

Hearing Eddie Cochran, Dave thought, "Maybe I could do this." When he heard his sisters playing their South Pacific and Oklahoma soundtrack LPs, he tuned in to their blissful transcendence and otherworldliness. "Wonderful music that seemed to come from outer space," he says. The "mesmerising, magical" voice of Doris Day had a similar effect.

Family life in the Davies household wasn't always so restful. "My mum's séances used to scare the shit outta me," he admits, recalling his mother's special spiritual sessions. Reading the tea leaves was another occasional family pastime. Mostly, the stories were just deliciously macabre, like the one about the brick that landed on boss-eyed Aunt Vi's head and corrected her vision, or Uncle Frank's ➢

Ray and Dave, now with a Gibson Flying V, in the studio; (far right) The Kinks in 1965 (from left) Ray, bassist Pete Quaife, Dave and drummer Mick Avory.

≺ gory tales from his Desert Rats days. "All these big characters swearing every other word. And you could trust every one of them."

Innocents in the cut-and-thrust of the burgeoning pop business, the Davies brothers learned not to trust the hard way. "The music business always attracted dubious people," says Dave. "So even though we'd get on each other's wick, the bond of family was important to us." The Kinks are still fighting for money they believe they're owed, he says, from royalties earned in the States five decades ago.

ALMOST DIRECTLY OPPOSITE THE OLD family home is the Clissold Arms. The old public bar, a regular haunt of Fred Davies, is now a Kinks Room crammed with vintage posters, record sleeves and curios. A scale model of the old Denmark Terrace family home catches Dave's eye. Glimpsing an artist's impression of him and Ray, he quickly turns away. "Scary," he says. "I can't look at that."

Landlord George is delighted to see Dave and sorts out drinks and a table in the dining room. Less than four yards away is the spot where, in December 1960, Dave and Ray made their public debut together. "I think Dad suggested it after a few pints," says Dave. "No advertising or anything like that. We sat down and played a few instrumentals. Just a try-out, really."

Once Dave has refuelled with tea, and egg sandwiches, we see a lot more of his natural playfulness. He's particularly partial to pulling funny faces then leering across the table, usually to illustrate the Fellini-esque qualities of a Davies family oddball. Later, he conducts an opening and closing of the nostrils routine in order to demonstrate the ancient art of meditation breathing. Do it properly he says, with nods of encouragement, and you might find your third eye opening up. Naturally, Dave has questioned his own sanity on many occasions. With a big grin, he's pleased to tell me that he's completely "unsane".

A few of the room's lunchtime diners recognise the distinctive Kink. One, an elegant woman who perhaps remembers The Kinks first time round, politely asks if he'd pose with her for a photo. Given the warmth and accommodating ways apparent from the moment we met outside East Finchley tube station, Dave's reaction comes as a surprise. He looks sheepish. Eventually, he offers an explanation. "What would my partner say?"

After You Really Got Me, Dave, the one-time school truant, became 'Dave The Rave'. He lived his success as if it would all be over in the morning. Belying innocent, almost girlish looks, Dave was soon on his way to becoming the archetypal partying, brawling, shag-anything, boozed-up, jail-bound tripped-out pop star mess. Unsurprisingly, he was prone to breakdowns and break-ups – sometimes with partners, mostly

BROTHERS

GONNA WORK IT OUT

DAVE DAVIES GIVES THE LOW-DOWN ON HIS LIVE FESTIVE REUNION WITH BROTHER RAY AT THE END OF 2015. BY CLIVE PRIOR.

"I e-mailed Ray the day before the gig," says Dave Davies, matter-of-factly. "I said I'd put him as a plus-one on the door in case he wanted to come down."

We're discussing the night of December 18, 2015, when Dave played a solo gig at London's Islington Assembly Hall, and, after a raw, heavy, fuzzed-up set of Kinks classics, lesser-known album tracks and solo numbers, Dave announced "a Christmas gift", as brother Ray arrived on stage, sporting flat cap, donkey jacket and lumberjack shirt; the first time the brothers had appeared together live since The Kinks' split in 1996.

"I'd e-mailed him again after the soundcheck," explains Dave, "saying that if he fancied it I thought it would be fun if he came on stage and sung You Really Got Me at the end. I wasn't sure if he was going to do it until the time came, and he just appeared from the wings." Amid much whooping and clapping, Ray continued the festive theme, pointing to his brother and announcing to the audience that, "The candles are on the Christmas tree, your gift is wrapped under the Christmas tree, but unfortunately you're banned from the house. Let's hear it for Dave Davies!"

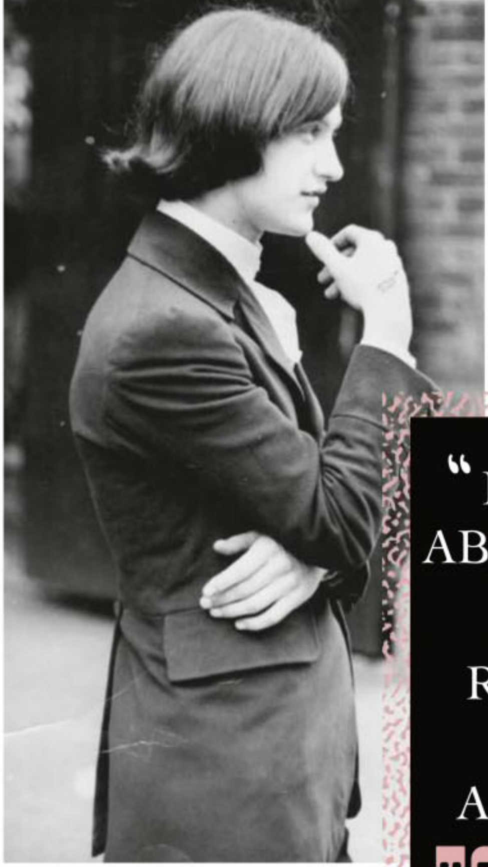
Dave replied with the opening thug-garage chords to You Really Got Me and the brothers and crowd bellowed through a scorched, rough-edged, hand-clapping audience participation version of The Kinks' game-changing 1964 single, after which Ray shook Dave's hand and exited stage right.

"It was very exciting and great fun," says Dave. "Ray was very respectful to me and left the stage afterwards so I could wrap things up with the crowd."

Asked if the brothers celebrated afterwards, or whether they would work together again in the future, perhaps under The Kinks' name, Dave remains cautious. "We simply exchanged a few laughs and wished each other a merry Christmas," he concludes, "and then we went our separate ways."

With thanks to Mark Paytress

Dave backs Ray one more time, Islington Assembly Hall, December 2015.



> “I WAS NERVOUS ABOUT THE WHOLE SOLO THING. RAY SAID TO ME, ‘DAVE, I CAN ALWAYS *CANCEL* TOP OF THE POPS FOR YOU?’ I SAID, *NO, FUCK THAT*.”

with Ray. He puts a lighter spin on it now. “I think we were just fighting to survive,” he says.

In Julien Temple’s remarkable, confessional 2011 Dave Davies documentary, Kinkdom Come, the guitarist talked in detail about this mid-’60s period when he was experimenting sexually as well as chemically, even living for a while with Ready Steady Go! compere Michael Aldred. Today, he clearly regards it as a minor detail. “Of course you question your sexuality when you’re that age,” he says. “Doesn’t everybody?”

Despite the near constant personal chaos, Dave initially held it together. “Everything was fine to start with,” he says. “I was driven by the music and all that came with it. Everything was hormones and heightened emotions. It was coming out of the walls.”

While Ray was living the quiet life, with a wife and baby, Dave dedicated himself to the pursuit of instant gratification. Ray drew inspiration. A 1965 demo, All Night Stand, sounds like a snapshot from Dave’s life. Sunny Afternoon B-side I’m Not Like Everybody Else could have applied to either brother, though clearly Dave’s tenderly defiant vocal was better suited to the song’s meaning.

Was Ray channelling you, I ask? “Of course. And on [1966 album track] Dandy too.” Even before the word is uttered, Dave quickly dismisses the word ‘muse’.

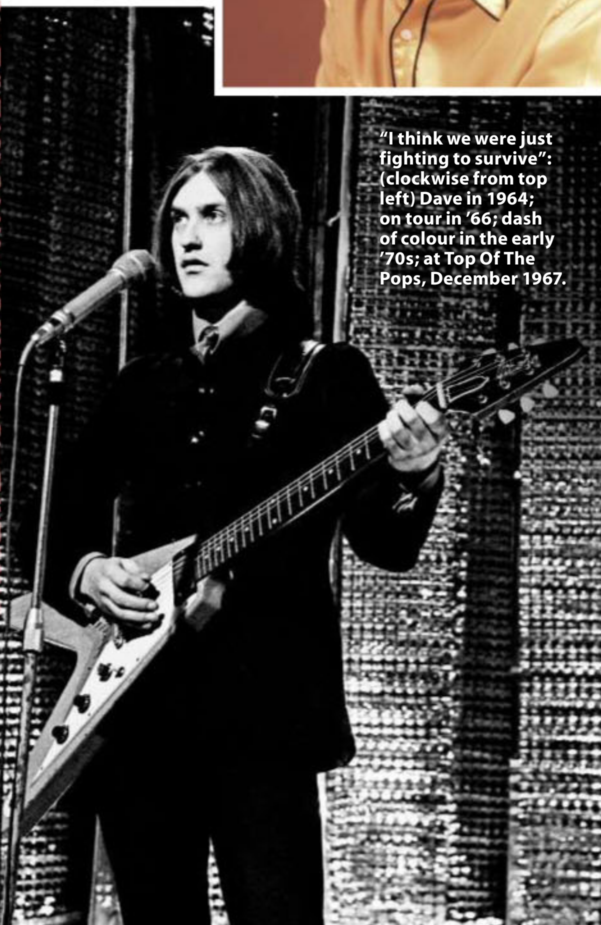
“I hate it,” he says. “It sounds snobby.”

Plus, in the context of his enormous contribution to The Kinks – and let’s highlight those conversational guitar hooks and inventive backing vocals for starters – it’s also possibly demeaning.

Some time in the early months of 1967, while propping up another party, Dave’s rave-up life collapsed. “I fell from a great height,” he says. “I saw that the whole thing was a circus, and that I was the sad clown putting on a brave front to hide the unhappiness.”

From this moment on, epiphanies of one sort or another would feature intermittently in Dave’s life. That particular revelation inspired a solo 45, issued at the prompting of The Kinks’ management, and with Ray’s apparent blessing. Death Of A Clown, a Top 3 solo hit for Dave in August 1967, had the aura of a one-hit wonder. But at the core of this deceptively upbeat mini-masterpiece of pop melancholy was wit, wisdom and pathos.

Getty Images (2), LFI/Photoshot, courtesy of Phil Smee (3)



“I think we were just fighting to survive”: (clockwise from top left) Dave in 1964; on tour in ’66; dash of colour in the early ’70s; at Top Of The Pops, December 1967.

DAVE DAVIES HITS

“All that yearning,” says Dave unfussily. “Nip round the corner and it’ll get better. That probably came from my family.”

Dave felt confident about the song, which was his composition, but with Ray providing the bridge. “But,” he says, “I was nervous about the whole [solo] thing.” Eventually, he agreed to do Top Of The Pops. “We were having a drink in a pub the night before, and Ray said something to me: ‘Dave, I can always cancel it for you?’ I said, No, fuck that.”

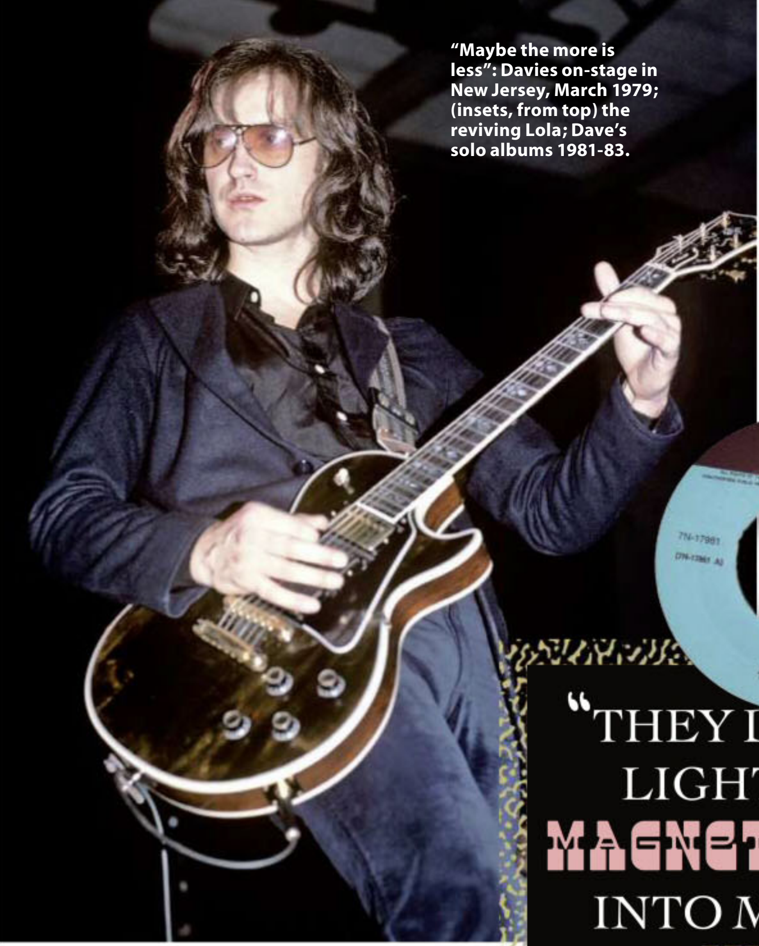
Do you think he wanted you to cancel?

“I don’t know,” says Dave.

Thinking about the development of his relationship with Ray as young adults, Dave uses the word “crooked”. Does he wish Ray had viewed him through more caring eyes?

“There’s a part of him that does, that can’t help but do that,” he says emphatically. “He tries to cover it but I can see it.”

The surprise success of Death Of A Clown gave credence to ➢


"Maybe the more is less": Davies on-stage in New Jersey, March 1979; (insets, from top) the reviving Lola; Dave's solo albums 1981-83.

PYE
45 RPM
LOLA
(R. D. Davies)
THE KINKS

< the announcement, in July 1967, that Dave was also working on a solo LP. When a second single, the riffier and similarly impressive Susannah's Still Alive, hit 20 late that year, Dave's prospects looked good. The album was still being mentioned in the press as late as 1969 but, despite a host of good songs in the can, nothing ever came of it. Dave's sideline solo career quietly evaporated.

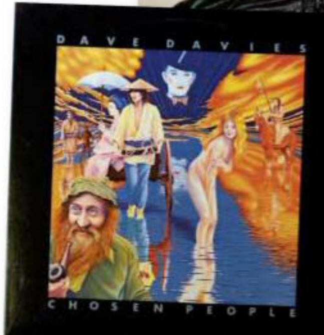
"If I'd really wanted it, I would have done it," he insists. I suspect Dave doubted himself as a frontman. He says he didn't think of it that way, which doesn't really answer the question. But something else does. "It made me feel old," he says. "That just didn't feel right."

Dave's manifest melancholia, and what he calls Ray's "morose" tendency to dwell, weighed heavily on the late-'60s Kinks. There had been no proper hit since 1967's Waterloo Sunset. Bassist Pete Quaife was always threatening to quit. 1968's *The Kinks Are The Village Green Preservation Society* didn't command the respect it deserved. The Kinks seemed out of sorts with the modern world.

"Being banned from playing America in 1966 made us more introverted," Dave insists. "While everyone else was playing Woodstock, we were playing the Fiesta in Stockton. I hated it."

> "THEY DIRECTED LIGHT LIKE A MAGNETIC LASER INTO MY *HEAD* AND *HEART* AND SHOW ME HOW TO DIRECT IT THROUGH *MUSIC*. IT WAS LIKE STAR WARS."

DAVE DAVIES
AFL1-3603



DAVIES
Glamour

ACCORDING TO DAVE, THE KINKS SPENT MOST OF their career trying to rescue themselves from the brink of catastrophic collapse. "It was like fighting death," he says. "Exhausting." Only a particularly exceptional song could stop the rot, and in June 1970, Ray Davies – with Dave in strong support – pulled Lola out of the bag. The single was a worldwide success. The Kinks were back in the US Top 10 for the first time since 1965. And Dave Davies was hitting a new low. "My old self was crumbling," he says. "It was a build-up of damage on every level." Dave's drug use didn't help. "Acid helped me in terms of my spiritual quest," he explains, "encouraging me to look behind things and not simply trust what you see. But hallucinogenics were also partly responsible for pushing me over the edge."

Throughout 1971, Dave's depression impacted on The Kinks' career with cancelled tours and hospitalisations. By July 1973 brother Ray was beaten too, announcing his retirement on-stage, suicidal off it. Ray worked through his recovery with a series of concept albums; Dave took the inner path. "I was trying to rebuild a new self," he says, "emotionally, spiritually and psychically." It began early in the decade with a simple daily yoga regime. Soon Dave was studying astrology, ceremonial magic, anything that offered tools for life and insights into the universe behind the universe. "I know it sounds weird," he says, "but I didn't feel comfortable in the music business. I kept asking, There has to be more. And maybe the more is actually less."

When The Kinks adopted a 'more is less' approach to their work for 1977's *Sleepwalker*, Dave Davies was in his element. "It was a guitar-orientated rock record," he says, "and a return to our roots. I loved it."

With the band now playing stadiums, Dave unleashed his inner rock guitar hero. A hard-hitting 1980 solo album, *AFL1-3603*, made the US Top 50. Two further sets failed to sustain the momentum. But by then, Dave had more important things on his mind. He'd been visited by aliens.

"It's nice of you to ask about that," he says, with a twinkle of surprise. "I'd given up talking about it because people think it's strange. But why? Wouldn't we all like to find an opening into the cosmic consciousness?"

On January 13, 1982, in Hampton, Virginia, while touring with The Kinks, Dave Davies felt the power of invisible forces. "I can only describe them as spirit beings with distinct aromas," he says. "They didn't have names but they were giving me information through energy."

How did that work? "If, for example, I was thinking about playing guitar in front of people, they would direct light like a magnetic laser into my head and heart and show me how to direct it through music. It was a bit like Star Wars, an incredible time for me."

Not everyone shared Dave's enthusiasm for the Force. "Every time I talked about it, people thought I was nuts," he says. Feeling misunderstood let his depression back in. He refused to take part in Ray's Return To Waterloo television project. Interviews for *Chosen People*, his bold, spiritually-driven third album, seemed to miss the point. In October 1983, apparently under doctor's orders, Dave was given six weeks' time away from the band and told to rest.

Dave knows the exact source for his deep, abiding interest in spirituality. "Whether it's DNA or something else, we're a highly psychic family," he says.

Getty Images, Expresspictures.com

"Ray is, too, but he never wants to sit down and thrash it out." In fact, Dave believes there's a likely psychic explanation for his brother's habitual character-hopping. "When we take on board these personas, these ideas about character and people, it's like we're engaging with the essence," he says. "We have to dance with these characters to get to know them, to hear what they're whispering in your ear."

A vital link to that psychic past disappeared late in November 1987 when Dave and Ray lost their mother, Annie, to cancer. "She was my first guru," he says. "She believed in the power of ideas but they had to make common sense. Those last three weeks when my mother was dying was one of the most extraordinary experiences I've ever been through. People were saying, 'How awful, you must be so upset.' The truth was that being in the middle of it helped me. It's like that analogy with the candle," he says. "The coolest part of the candle is in the centre. Confronting our fears is one of the ways we learn character and find out what we're capable of."

Or your brother, I suggest.

"Oh, my brother's one of the least of my problems!"

On February 3, 1997, Ray threw a 50th birthday party for Dave at the Clissold Arms. After that, nothing. No more Kinks. After four wild, often strained decades, you'd think Dave might have welcomed the sense of liberation. "I don't know," he says. "I always believed in me and Ray as some sort of force. We could be at loggerheads, but when we'd get up on stage, the place would fill with joy."

I ask him how he feels when he sees Ray duetting with Springsteen or Metallica on old Kinks songs, or rearranging You Really Got Me for a choir at Glastonbury? "I've always felt good about Ray doing things that make him feel better," he says. "That's what we're supposed to do, isn't it? Call me old-fashioned but I think a lot of great truth or wisdom is simple."

The true meaning of that belief was brought into focus on June 30, 2004, when Dave collapsed in a lift after an interview for BBC radio. It was a stroke. He'd lost all the feeling in the right side of his body.

"I thought I was a goner," he admits. "But despite not being able to move properly, I could still feel something. It's like in that song, Strangers [one of Dave's two contributions to 1970's *Lola Versus Powerman And The Moneygoround, Part One*]. What if we get to a point when we realise that we're everybody else? Well, that's how I felt. Only now, it seemed stronger than it was before."

Strangers is probably Dave's finest song. It's also the one song from The Kinks' classic era that sounds more American than British. It's more The Band than the Muswell Hillbillies, its ease of pace and subtle offbeat rhythm creating rich, timeless music. The song's key phrase, "We are not two/We are one", invites an obvious reading about the holy bond of brothers. But Strangers is bigger, more open than that. "We think we're strangers on this road," says Dave. "But maybe we're not."

"I like anything that confuses the conscious mind," Dave says as we wind down. "I think that's why we got rock'n'roll in the first place, because we needed to think differently. Or maybe not think at all."

Dave Davies is truly The Kinks' Wonderboy. A self-confessed melancholic who lives for awe-struck experiences, he's spent a lifetime "turning sorrow into wonder". That sense of wonder is still palpable. "Being alive is fascinating," he says, "especially if you believe the universe likes to play." He loves cats, he says, warming to the theme. "Cats and elephants. I can watch a kitten mess around all day. They're so intelligent." What about the elephant? "Strength."

As we get up to leave, I throw a wild card. "Have you any idea what you and Ray are coming back as in the next life?"

"Each other," he says, erupting with laughter. "The final curse!"

Dave Davies's new long-player Rippin' Up New York City is out on Red River Entertainment.

DAVE: THE RAVE

EIGHT GREAT DAVIES JR COMPOSITIONS.
BY ANDREW MALE.

DEATH OF A CLOWN

(single A-side, 1967)

DAVE DAVIES
DEATH OF A CLOWN

Ray regularly needled his brother on-stage by introducing him as "Mr Dave 'Death Of A Clown' Davies", but what songwriter wouldn't wish to be saddled with a solo debut like this, a co-write with Ray that captures the woozy bar-room delirium and maudlin self-pity of life in an ailing rock'n'roll circus.

Find it: *Something Else* (PYE)

LOVE ME TILL THE SUN SHINES

(single B-side, 1967)

Death Of A Clown
Love Me Till The Sun Shines
Dave Davies

A desperate plea for a one-night stand – possibly as a financial transaction – Death Of A Clown's flip-side replaces the macho arrogance of The Rolling Stones' Let's Spend The Night Together with a pleading vulnerability, highlighting the fear and loneliness lurking within the Summer of Love's chilly shadows.

Find it: *Something Else* (PYE)

SUSANNAH'S STILL ALIVE

(single A-side, 1967)

Dave Davies
SUSANNAH'S STILL ALIVE

More bedsit nightmares from the younger Kink, queasy descending chords on a music-hall piano pull us into the desperate world of a young woman lying awake in bed at night awaiting death, salvation, companionship or something far more chilling.

Find it: *Something Else* (BONUS TRACK, UNIVERSAL 2011)

THIS MAN HE WEEPS TONIGHT

(Pye B-side, 1969)

the KINKS
SHANGRI-LA

The flip to Ray's Shangri-La and, if anything, a more sympathetic portrayal of the travails of "the little man who gets the train" that every British pop band sang about that year; an interior world of dreams undone by the end of a marriage, with Dave's subdued delivery like the defeated voices inside his head.

Find it: *Hidden Treasures* (UNIVERSAL)

STRANGERS

(album track, 1970)

One of the stand-outs from the patchy but brilliant 1970 LP, *Lola Versus Powerman And The Moneyground, Part One*, Strangers unfolds like Dave's brotherly oath of commitment to The Kinks' foolhardy quest, a heartfelt pledge to follow Ray's "promised lie" of success, through grief and anger, because, although they're "strangers on this road", despite it all "we are not two, we are one."

Find it: *Lola Versus Powerman And The Moneygoround, Part One* (PYE)

YOU DON'T KNOW MY NAME

(single B-side, 1972)

Kinks
Supersonic Rocket Ship
You Don't Know My Name

Two years on from Strangers, the slog is getting harder and Dave's commitment to The Kinks is waning. So what does he do? Rework the guitar line from Strangers into a despairing slide-country sequel in which he ponders his invisibility and the monotony of life on the road and wonders where it all went wrong.

Find it: *Everybody's In Show-Biz* (RCA VICTOR)

LIVING ON A THIN LINE

(album track, 1984)

As featured in season three of The Sopranos, this anthemic album track from 1985's *Word Of Mouth* is the point where Dave draws a parallel between life within The Kinks and the chaos and bleakness of the outside world. If there's a moment where he decides to seek answers within the metaphysical realm, it's here.

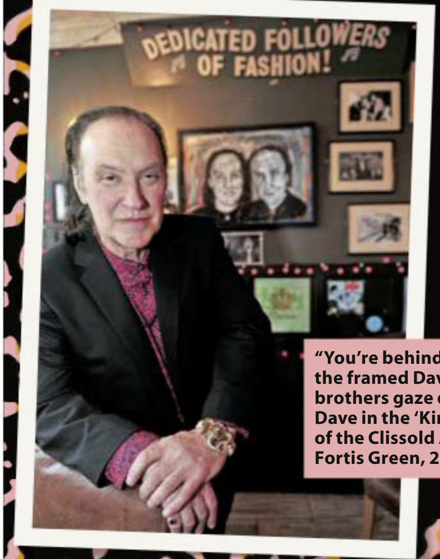
Find it: *Word Of Mouth* (ARISTA)

LOST IN YOUR ARMS

(album track, 2001)

Opinions are divided over which Dave Davies solo LP best encapsulates the man, but here at MOJO we have a soft spot for this 2001 collection of vulnerable 1980s and '90s demos, particularly gossamer ballads like this woozy nocturnal billet-doux that eerily approximates Dave's post-Kinks attempts to inhabit a new spiritual self.

Find it: *Fragile* (META MEDIA)


DEDICATED FOLLOWERS OF FASHION!

"You're behind you!": the framed Davies brothers gaze down on Dave in the 'Kinks' bar of the Clissold Arms, Fortis Green, 2014.

HANGING TOUGH

A MASTER GUITARIST AND SONGWRITER FIT TO STAND ALONGSIDE JANSCH, RENBOURN AND HARPER, **MICHAEL CHAPMAN** REMAINS INEXPLICABLY UNDERRATED AND OVERLOOKED. **BEN THOMPSON** TRAVELLED TO THE SINGER'S NORTHUMBRIAN FARMHOUSE TO HEAR WILD TALES AND INFLAMMATORY BROADSIDES FROM 50 YEARS OF ARTISTRY AND HARD GRAFT. PORTRAIT BY **BARRY PLUMMER**

AT EAST LONDON'S VILLAGE UNDERGROUND on a rainy night in late 2014, Michael Chapman – self-styled "old white blues guy from Yorkshire" – is opening for the Ben Watt Trio. In the course of a sparkling half-hour set this craggy 73-year-old's guitar-playing somehow calls to mind the fabled intricacy of Pentangle heavy-hitters John Renbourn and Bert Jansch, the muscular authority of Jimmy Page and the maverick edge of Roy Harper, without once compromising its own indisputably Chapman-esque character.

Bernard Butler (one of the Trio) watches rapt but a little pale from the back of the room. "Good luck following that" observes one sardonic punter. "You're not kidding," Butler replies, before describing an intimidating dressing room exchange, wherein Chapman had dashed off a dazzling piece of improvised virtuosity and then handed young Bernard the guitar as if to say "now you have a go".

Putting the fear of God into headlining acts isn't new to Michael Chapman. He was doing it to Emerson, Lake & Palmer in the early '70s. Even that hefty 40-year stride back into the past gets us nowhere near the start of a story which – from late-'50s beginnings in the skiffle and trad jazz scenes; through the folk and blues booms of the '60s; to giving a pre-Spiders From Mars Mick Ronson (then Hull's most eligible council gardener) his big break playing on Chapman's second studio LP, *Fully Qualified Survivor*, John Peel's favourite album of 1970; to Chapman's recent ascension to John Fahey's throne as the Godfather of experimental rock guitar – would be hard to match in terms of artistic range and creative resilience against the odds.

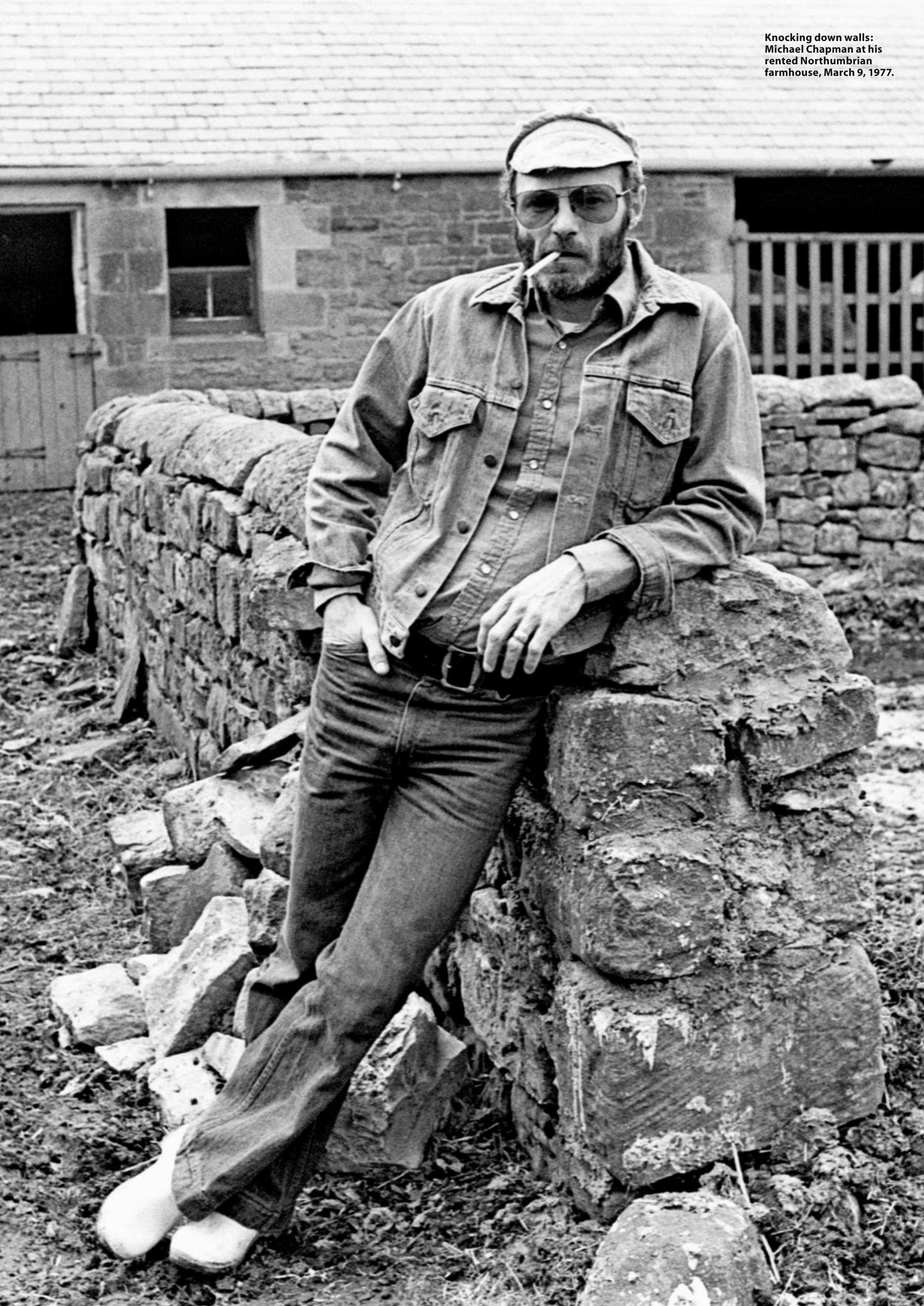
Thurston Moore insists that Sonic Youth "would not have existed" without the exploratory Big Apple street-sounds-channelling coda of New York Ladies, on Chapman's stunning 1973 album *Millstone Grit*. Such recent impassioned alt-celeb advocacy has combined with the Light In The Attic's label's meticulous vinyl reissues of four superb but long-undervalued frazzled troubadour albums made for Harvest between 1969 and 1972, and Tompkins Square's sublime 40-year span of guitar instrumentals, *Trainsong*, to bring Chapman's music a new, admiring audience.

Meeting Chapman for the first time, on a stormy night in the rugged but welcoming Northumbrian farmhouse he and his partner Andru have rented since 1972, his reputation for plain-speaking proves well-founded. As a splendid fire roars in the grate, he makes the following series of inflammatory statements, their subjects' identity redacted for legal reasons: "I've gone off him a bit since four people told me he wouldn't let Bert on the tour-bus"; "They called the cops on her in the end – she can be a bit of a handful when she's had a drink"; and, my personal favourite, "He was sending 16-year-old girls out to score dope for him in a communist dictatorship. If they'd got ➢

DERAM
MILLSTONE GRIT
MICHAEL CHAPMAN

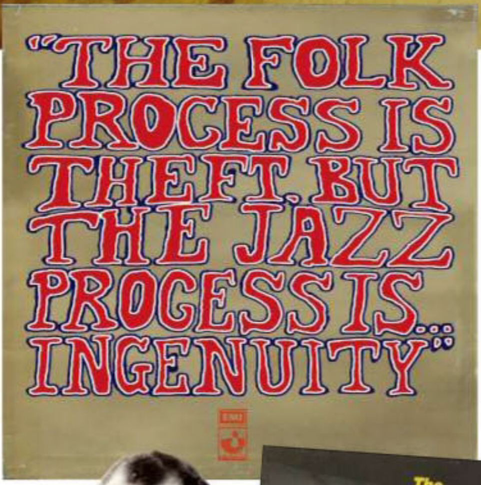
Chapman (right) with partner Andru and fan Thurston Moore, February 2010; (insets) MC albums *Fully Qualified Survivor*, *Millstone Grit*.

Courtesy of Michael Chapman.co.uk



Knocking down walls: Michael Chapman at his rented Northumbrian farmhouse, March 9, 1977.

Embarked on a mind-bending journey: Chapman on-stage at Audimax, Hamburg, November 11, 1973, around the time of *Millstone Grit*.



"THE FOLK PROCESS IS THEFT, BUT THE JAZZ PROCESS IS... INGENUITY"

≺ caught they would have been executed and he didn't give a shit."

Then Andru calls us through from the front room (decor features: a collection of cowboy boots, some rare '60s blues festival posters rescued from a German promoter's bin, a plethora of framed photographs of Andru in various degrees of nakedness) to the kitchen to enjoy the delicious vegetarian meal she has whipped up from her Ottolenghi cookbook. Dinner dispatched, the on-the-record section of the evening begins with Chapman's traditional explanation of Leeds' status as "a jazz town" – "because Leeds was, and is, a police state, the boys in blue wouldn't allow rock'n'roll to be played in the same building as Tetley's bitter was sold."

Although this fond slur will not be news to any close reader of the *Fully Qualified Survivor* reissue sleevenotes, Chapman's recall of the two 1958 epiphanies which would shape his professional career is so vivid that it feels like they took place yesterday, rather than 60 years ago. Sitting in a newsreel cinema near Leeds train station, watching the Jazz On A Summer's Day footage of The Jimmy Giuffre Trio playing The Train And The River at the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival, he remembers "The reflections on the water, and then that beautiful music… it changed my life completely," while Chapman's account of Muddy Waters' appearance at the 1958 Leeds jazz festival is a musical education in itself.

"First up," he remembers, in a gruff but kindly Yorkshire burr, "was this very polite 18-piece Anglo-American jazz band, who were basically a waste of space. But when they went home, so did most of the audience. Then this little black guy – who we later realised was Otis Spann – came out. His blue suit looked like it was lit by electricity, and he gathered up all the microphones and dumped them in the grand piano. Then this other, larger black guy, who of course was Muddy Waters, appeared – same colour suit – pushing out what looked to me like a wardrobe. He brought on another, and another, and another, until there were four white Fender Showman amps on the stage. When Muddy Waters came back on and plugged in his white-on-white Fender Telecaster, it wasn't just loud, it was the loudest thing ever heard in Leeds. He was playing at Chicago blues club levels to an English jazz festival! I remember thinking Christ, that's loud… then he turned it up. I was rooted to the spot. The jazz audience –

The Jimmy Giuffre 3
RAINMAKER
STEREO
SHVL 755

Chapman, late '60s: he'd been inspired by Muddy Waters (right) and The Jimmy Giuffre 3; (inset) his *Fish* and *Rainmaker* albums.

Fotex, Courtesy of Michael Chapman, Getty Images, Alamy

all these people who thought they were intellectuals – fled in horror, but they should've stayed, because it was perfect."

After paying his way through Leeds art college with his guitar – in skiffle bands, Soho strip clubs or as "the only white guitarist in the jazz clubs of Chapeltown" – Chapman forsook live music for a few years to teach photography at Bolton art college. But summer 1966 found him resurfacing as a stalwart of a then-thriving Cornish folk scene alongside Wizz Jones and Ralph McTell. *Live At Folk Cottage, Cornwall 1967* – a double LP set released for the first time in 2014 – captures Chapman just a few months into this new incarnation, playing with now familiar dynamism and aplomb but singing in a barely recognisable mid-Atlantic accent. How he evolved from this respectful blues and folk performer to the downbeat visionary of 1969's debut LP proper *Rainmaker* in a little less than 18 months is still something of a mystery. Perhaps the arguments about jazz he had with Philip Larkin while living in Hull – Andru had got into the art school there – had something to do with it.

"He thought Sidney Bechet was the death of God," Chapman remembers, "so me raving about Charlie Parker was never going to go down too well." Or maybe it was the time Jimi Hendrix dropped by all-night Soho folk haunt Les Cousins and played three songs on Chapman's Martin D-18 guitar while the Yorkshireman was eating a sandwich in the car outside. Either way, initially signed by EMI's "deranged hippy" offshoot Harvest to be their "Davy Graham guitar guy", Chapman persuaded producer Gus Dudgeon to let him go his own way. Anyone hearing Light In The Attic's reissues for the first time who thinks Jim O'Rourke was the first to combine classic rock song structures, world-weary vocals, rich orchestration, American Primitive-tinged guitar instrumentals and avant-garde noise interludes is in for a shock.

If Jansch, Renbourn and Harper were the Three Musketeers of British guitar, Chapman was – and still is – the D'Artagnan; able to mix it with the others, but just as likely to go his own way. Yet it's to the still more mercurial Davy Graham that Chapman feels the greatest debt is owed. "Davy was the first," he says. "If he hadn't done what he did, there's no way of knowing if that whole huge acoustic scene would have come out of the woodwork."

As to why Graham never quite capitalised on his pre-eminent status, Chapman says, "I played with him a couple of times, but you never quite felt like you'd actually met Davy, 'cos in a way he wasn't really there. He went to Morocco and came back with all these great ideas, but something which happened out there bent his brain, and it never quite came back the same way."

Chapman, by contrast, seems to have come through his own mind-bending journeys more or less unscathed, although the Washington date of his first American tour in August 1971, on a bill with hard-bop saxophonist Cannonball Adderley, still sounds pretty hairy. "Capitol Records didn't know what to do with me," explains Chapman, "and it was around the time Miles Davis was playing at the Fillmore with the Grateful Dead… kind of made sense."

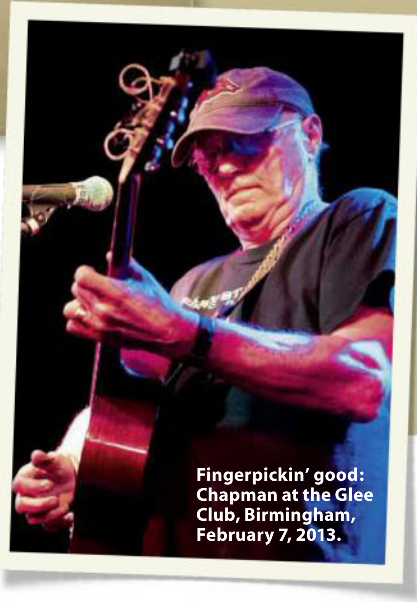
Chapman found himself opening the show to a volatile crowd on the night news broke of George Jackson's death at the hands of a San Quentin prison guard. Bass-player Rick Parry having prudently done a runner, Chapman played the gig solo to an audience whose eagerness to see a white guy playing an acoustic guitar would've been hard to under-estimate. "I remember every second of it," he says, his relief at surviving still palpable. "Especially being backstage when Nancy Wilson – who was a gorgeous Las Vegas jazz singer – turned up: she was wearing battle-dress from head to toe, but it was Pierre Cardin… One of the proudest moments of my career was after the gig when Cannon said to me, 'Michael, you ain't chicken.' I might not've been chicken, but I was certainly scared shitless."

Chapman's preference for "jazzers" over "folkies" is a topic to which he often returns."The folk process is theft," he observes, with a roguish twinkle, "but the jazz process is… ingenuity." It strikes me that his remarkable Indian summer of the last decade and a half or so has been partly sustained by an ability to treat his own repertoire with the creative irreverence of the great jazz players (check out the way Chapman's version of Tom Rush's instrumental corker Rockport Sunday has evolved into Stockport Monday on 2015's *Fish* LP). "Exactly," he exclaims. "How many different ways did Miles play My Funny Valentine? Obviously I'm never going to be Miles Davis, but why shouldn't I approach my own music in the same spirit as the people I most admire?"

Maybe rock'n'rollers are supposed to die before they get old, but Yorkshire jazzmen are in it for the long haul. By the time I've persuaded him to play me a few tracks from some of the "four and a half" new albums he's recorded in the past year (including a split release with Hiss Golden Messenger, an album of collaborations with Israeli rock star Ehud Banai, a jazz quartet, and an LP of instrumental guitar homages to heroes and friends including Jim Hall, Glenn Jones and Jack Rose), Michael Chapman's grateful contention that he is currently playing "better than ever" is hard to refute.

"We are not athletes," he grins, pouring himself another glass of red wine, "we don't burn out at 30." Ⓜ

Michael Chapman's 50 Years On The Road tour starts on April 21. All of Chapman's Harvest releases are available now on Light In The Attic


Fingerpickin' good: Chapman at the Glee Club, Birmingham, February 7, 2013.

KEEP ON RUNNING

THREE STAGES OF MICHAEL CHAPMAN'S GENIUS.
BY TOMPKINS SQUARE LABEL-HEAD, JOSH ROSENTHAL.

WRECKED AGAIN

Harvest, 1971

★★★★

WRECKED
AGAIN

Wrecked Again delivers with a craggy elegance, brandishing a wicked triple-threat: classic rock pedigree (Gus Dudgeon producing, Paul Buckmaster string arrangements), guitar mastery, ace singing and writing, particularly on The First Leaf Of Autumn ("The first leaf of our autumn/Slides gently to the ground/Like an angel from a leaden sky/That never can be found.") He signed my gatefold LP, "This is what you look like after 3 years in the van." You should see him now.

HEARTBEAT

Coda, 1987

★★★★

It's easy to forget how nowhere so many '60s-era artists were in the pre-internet late '80s. YouTube has now schooled everyone on heroes past, but in 1987, you either shrivelled up or kept making records. Michael did the latter. *Heartbeat* is part of the Coda label's New Age Landscape Series (yikes!), but it actually has some of MC's most fluid, hypnotic playing.

TIME PAST & TIME PASSING

Electric Ragtime, 2008

★★★★

Energised by tours with Jack Rose, MC sculpts the version of himself we've come to know in these later years – weathered, philosophical songcraft (Sometimes, That Time Of Night), wedding-ring slide (Fahey's Flag), and luminous finger-picking that gets deep under your skin (Ponchatoulah, Dewsbury Road). Inside is a quote: "The race belongs not just to the quick and the strong/But to those who keep on running."

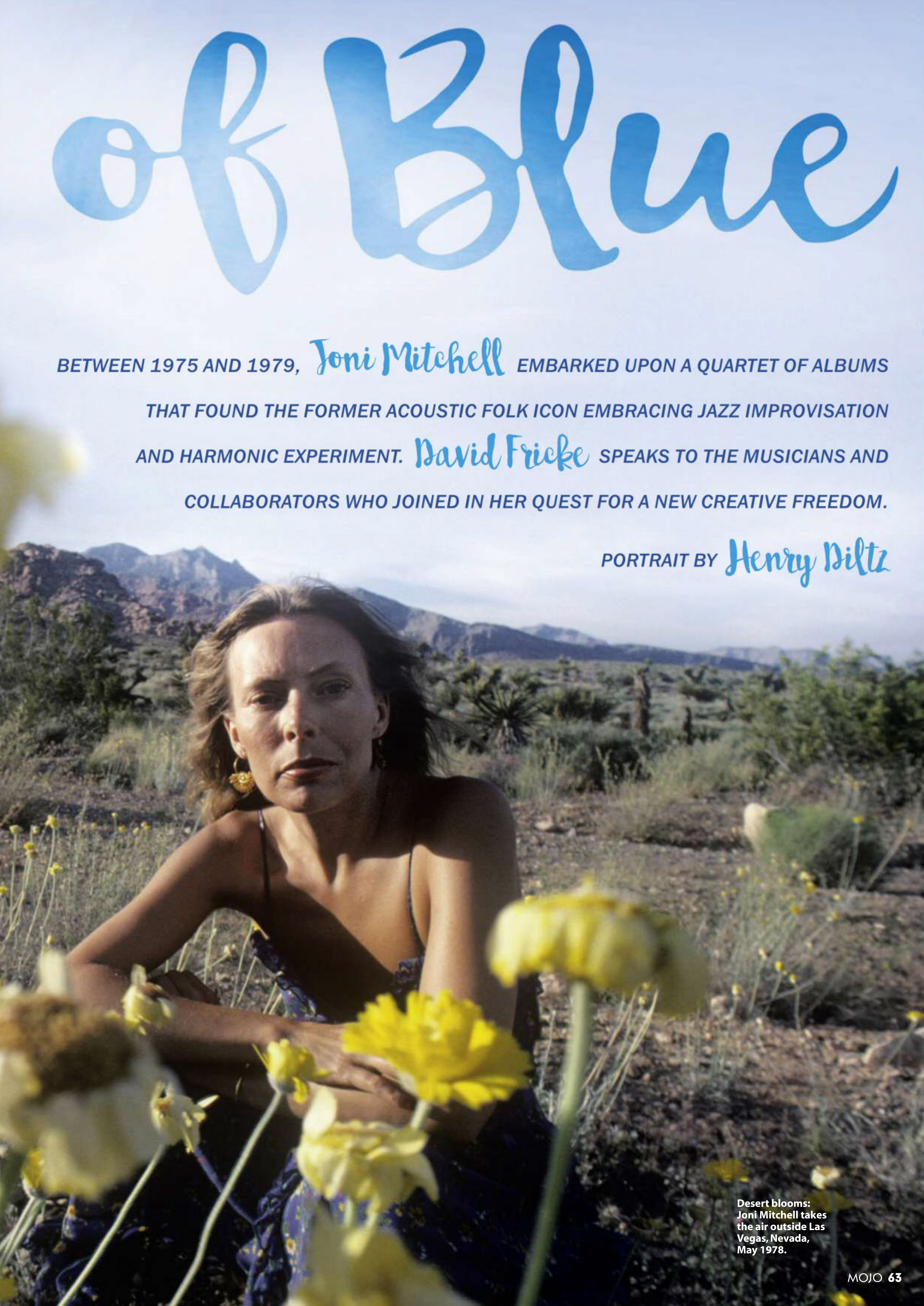
Get Josh Rosenthal's memoir The Record Store Of The Mind at tompkinssquare.com

A Kind

# of Blue

BETWEEN 1975 AND 1979, **Joni Mitchell** EMBARKED UPON A QUARTET OF ALBUMS THAT FOUND THE FORMER ACOUSTIC FOLK ICON EMBRACING JAZZ IMPROVISATION AND HARMONIC EXPERIMENT. **David Fricke** SPEAKS TO THE MUSICIANS AND COLLABORATORS WHO JOINED IN HER QUEST FOR A NEW CREATIVE FREEDOM.

PORTRAIT BY **Henry Diltz**



Desert blooms: Joni Mitchell takes the air outside Las Vegas, Nevada, May 1978.

THE LINE RAN DOWN THE BLOCK OUTSIDE THE BAKED POTATO ON TUESDAY nights in 1973. Named after the main dish on the menu, the small, venerable Los Angeles jazz club – founded by pianist Don Randi in 1970 – hosted a popular residency by a combo of top, local improvisers who also happened to be among the busiest session musicians in town. The nominal leader, saxophonist Tom Scott, made records with John Coltrane's producer Bob Thiele and did a roaring business in TV and movie scores. But the other cats were his equals in resumé.

Pianist Joe Sample was a founding member of hard-bop-turned-R&B stars The Crusaders; bassist Max Bennett grew up in the bebop era and worked with singers Peggy Lee and Ella Fitzgerald; drummer John Guerin played with Thelonious Monk, Lou Rawls and Linda Ronstadt and was in a late line-up of The Byrds. He and Bennett were the backbeat on Frank Zappa's 1969 instrumental smash, *Hot Rats*.

"THE HOTTEST NEW GROUP IN JAZZ"
LAMBERT, HENDRICKS, & ROSS!
COLUMBIA

Joni Mitchell
Court and Spark

"It was just for the fun of getting out of the studio," says guitarist Larry Carlton, who was in The Crusaders at the time and joined the Baked Potato fun after a previous guitarist didn't work out. "We never rehearsed. We just jammed."

Things got more serious after Scott – who had played woodwinds on Joni Mitchell's latest album, *For The Roses* – invited the Canadian-born singer-songwriter to see the band, dubbed the L.A. Express. Mitchell's early records – the largely acoustic quartet of 1968's *Song To A Seagull*, '69's *Clouds*, '70's *Ladies Of The Canyon* and *Blue* the following year – made her a folk icon, a regal angel of tenderly frank, romantic confession. But the former Roberta Joan Anderson knew a few things about jazz too. She heard Miles Davis's *Sketches Of Spain* as a teenager in Saskatoon and was especially knocked out, at a party, by *The Hottest New Group In Jazz*, a 1962 LP by the vocal trio Lambert, Hendricks & Ross. "I've always considered that album to be my Beatles," Mitchell told Downbeat's Leonard Feather in 1979, "because I learned every song off it."

At the Baked Potato, Mitchell met the L.A. Express and asked the band to play on her next record, *Court And Spark*. Mitchell and her engineer Henry Lewy "booked four or five days with us" at A&M Studios, Carlton says, "but it worked so well that they just committed to it."

> "Joni loved the band, but she really loved the drummer. "They were a hit right away."
> Max Bennett

Mitchell – 29, a divorceé and previously linked romantically with Graham Nash and James Taylor – also fell for Guerin, a handsome charmer in his mid-thirties.

"Joni loved the band, but she *really* loved the drummer," Bennett cracks fondly. "They were a hit right away."

So was *Court And Spark*, which was finished in late '73, issued in January, 1974 and went to Number 2 in Billboard, selling over two million copies. It was Mitchell's first album with a working band (guests included Crusaders bassist Wilton Felder and The Band's Robbie Robertson), and the bond was plain in the title song's firm groove and the rhythmic, choral buoyancy of Raised On Robbery. Mitchell's run-on melodies and eccentric guitar tunings perplexed the L.A. Express at first.

"Joe and I were looking at each other," Bennett says, "like, 'This is different. Is it going to work?'"

However, the musicians were versatile enough to relish and master the challenge. Mitchell's writing "was very sophisticated harmonically," Carlton says, "yet so accessible." The L.A. Express's unhurried swing and incisive flourishes, in turn, illuminated Mitchell's reflective language in Free Man In Paris, an affectionate portrait of her label boss and friend David Geffen, and the swooning hit single Help Me, a clear reference to the singer's new ecstasy with Guerin.

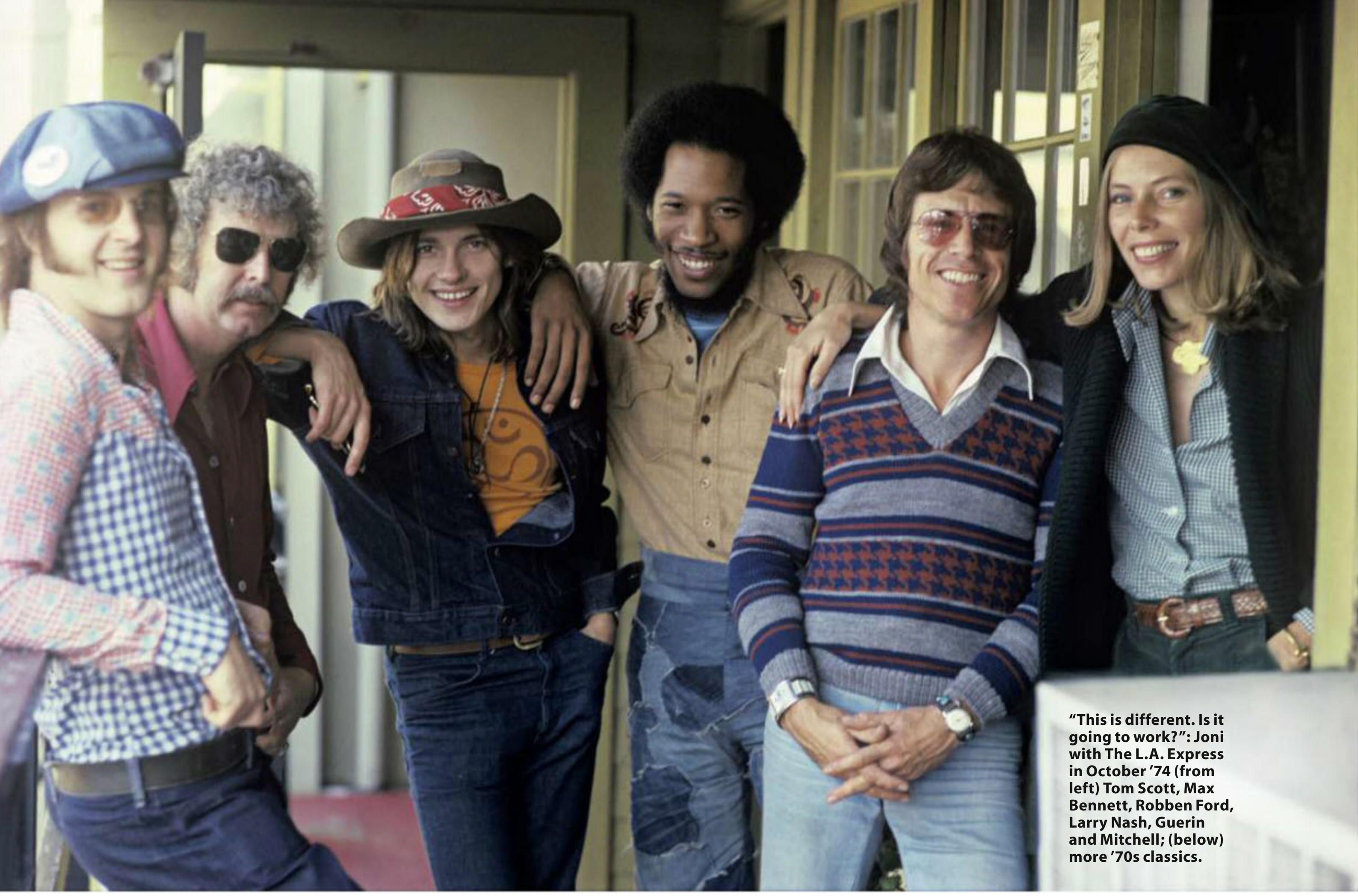
Court And Spark – which ended with Twisted, a cover from that Lambert, Hendricks & Ross album – marked the start of Mitchell's most provocative era on record, an adventure in harmonic exploration, textural dynamics and interior complexity often referred to as her 'jazz years'. She worked with members of the L.A. Express across three more albums – 1975's *The Hissing Of Summer Lawns*, '76's *Hejira* and the 1977 double long-player, *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter* – while forging a profound, creative bond with the prodigious bassist Jaco Pastorius, an association that peaked on 1979's *Mingus*, Mitchell's homage to the titanic jazz bassist Charles Mingus.

Bennett is blunt in his summation of Mitchell as a jazz singer. "It was fantastic to work with Peggy and Ella," he says, "but Joni's voice – there was nothing to match it." Former Weather Report drummer Peter Erskine, who played on *Mingus*, says he heard "a burning essence, the white heat of phosphorus" in Mitchell's work, especially with Pastorius. But guitarist Robben Ford – who joined the L.A. Express for the 1974 tour that became the live album, *Miles Of Aisles*, and played on *The Hissing Of Summer Lawns* and *Hejira* – claims Mitchell drew from "countless resources" including visual arts and African music, notably in *Hissing*'s The Jungle Line, a densely lyrical vision of French painter Henri Rousseau set to Moog and a proto-sampling loop of Burundi drumming. "It was like she was making movies," says Ford.

Mitchell's hard turn from easily adored balladry tested her audience – *The Hissing Of Summer Lawns* was her last Top 10 album in the US – and divided critics. She was voted 1975's Top Jazz and Pop Vocalist by Playboy, ➢

Henry Diltz, Getty Images

Car on a hill: Joni takes the wheel, October 1974; (opposite) Mitchell and L.A. Express drummer and more, John Guerin; (insets) her '74 highlight *Court And Spark* and the inspirational Lambert, Hendricks & Ross.



"This is different. Is it going to work?": Joni with The L.A. Express in October '74 (from left) Tom Scott, Max Bennett, Robben Ford, Larry Nash, Guerin and Mitchell; (below) more '70s classics.

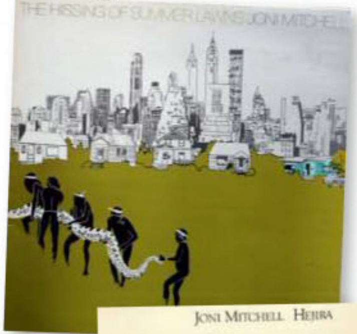
< while Rolling Stone dismissed *The Hissing…* as "substantial literature . . . set to insubstantial music" and complained that on *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter* Mitchell had "chosen to abandon melody at a time when she needs it most urgently."

But her experimental ardour resonated with subsequent generations: On *A Tribute To Joni Mitchell*, a 2007 compilation, Björk, Elvis Costello, Sufjan Stevens, k.d. lang and jazz pianist Brad Mehldau all covered songs from this period. "I learned *Hejira* and *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter* by heart when I was 15," Björk told me last year. "She was creating her own universe; she wasn't a guest in a man's world."

Mitchell – now 72 and in seclusion, recovering from a brain aneurysm last spring – was adamant in her course when she spoke to Rolling Stone in 1979. "You have two choices," she told Cameron Crowe. People will "crucify you for staying the same. If you change, they're going to crucify you for changing. But staying the same is boring. And change is interesting.

"I'd rather be crucified," she declared, "for changing."

> "Staying the same is boring. And change is interesting. I'd rather be crucified, for changing."
> Joni Mitchell



THE HISSING OF SUMMER LAWNS JONI MITCHELL

JONI MITCHELL HEJIRA

ROBBEN FORD WAS 22 AND ABOUT to quit his job – playing guitar for blues singer Jimmy Witherspoon – when Tom Scott called his manager's office in January 1974 with an offer to go on the road with Joni Mitchell. Ford had no idea who she was. When Scott played him an acetate of *Court And Spark*, the guitarist found the music "a little over my head". He also recalls Mitchell's arrival during his first rehearsal with the L.A. Express.

"She looked like a gazelle, glorious and magical," Ford says brightly. "I had been scuffling, and this was a huge step up on every level – the company I was keeping, the music I was making." Ford worked from charts, building on Carlton's parts for *Court And Spark*. But the "harmonic environment created by her alternate tunings was a different language and very demanding."

Carlton – who declined to tour, choosing to stay in the studio and stick with The Crusaders – says the members of The L.A. Express mostly arranged their own parts on *Court And Spark*, encouraged by Mitchell. "But we were servants to the artist and song," he adds, citing the rattled sigh of his guitar in the opening of Help Me. "It's just a G major 7th chord on a down beat, but it sets up her next line perfectly. That's all I had to play in that spot."

Mitchell, working closely with Lewy, was a decisive leader too. The L.A. Express cut their tracks for *Court And Spark* live in the studio, often with Mitchell in the vocal booth. But when Carlton heard Free Man In Paris on the album, he discovered a second, overdubbed guitarist, Jose Feliciano, in the final mix. "I can hear the roughness in his playing," Carlton says. "She added his licks back there to put some edge on a mood."

"I do have this reputation for being a serious person," Mitchell admitted to Cameron Crowe. But, she insisted, "I love to dance. I'm a rowdy. I'm a good timer." She was as good as her word on two 1974 North American tours with The L.A. Express – more than 60 shows in major theatres, arenas and amphitheatres. She and Guerin "would hang

Henry Diltz (2), Getty Images, Robert Trujillo

out together – they were an item," Bennett notes. "But she was really one of the guys."

Ford was walking through an airport, waiting for a flight to the next show, when he spotted Mitchell, Guerin, Scott and Lewy in a bar with a portable tape deck, cracking up as they listened to a recording of comic hipster Lord Buckley's life-of-Jesus routine, The Nazz. "She was a ball," Ford says of Mitchell. "And John had played with Monk. Suddenly, I was in this culture, inundated with coolness."

George Harrison wanted a piece of the fun after he saw Mitchell's April show at the New Victoria theatre in London, her only European stop that year. The next day, the ex-Beatle invited the entourage to his Friar Park estate. Mitchell returned to London in the evening; The L.A. Express stuck around until 7am the following morning, cutting two tracks with Harrison that ended up on his 1974 album, *Dark Horse*. Ford later played on the title track as well.

"It took me six years to find a band that inflamed me to that degree," Mitchell said of the L.A. Express in a 1973 interview with Malka Marom, a singer and friend from the Toronto folk scene. (In 2014, Marom published their conversations over the years in a book, Joni Mitchell In Her Own Words.) "But even with that band," Mitchell added, "I wanted a more resonant sound."

For *The Hissing*…, Mitchell retained the L.A. Express – using both Carlton and Ford on guitars – but in varying combinations with additional colouring including brass, vibes and electronics. (Mitchell plays the Moog on The Jungle Line.)

"I did the same thing there that I did on *Court And Spark*," says Carlton, who played on Edith And The Kingpin, a cautionary tale of hard-drug life, and Mitchell's childhood memoir Don't Interrupt The Sorrow. "I think she became so familiar with what each of us could give that she heard it in her head – 'Oh, I hear Larry on this one.' But it was very loose – the kind of freedom where we would all magically find that spot where the song was."

Mitchell toured with The L.A. Express again in January and February 1976 but that magic was on the wane. She had just come off the late-'75 leg of Bob Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue; *The Hissing*… was getting a hard time in the press; and her relationship with Guerin was coming to a painful finish. "We were in Philadelphia," Bennett says, "and somebody said, 'John's got his own room.' I was like, Uh, oh." On February 22, at the University of Maryland, Mitchell sang the first line of her opening number, Help Me – "Help me, I think I'm falling in love again" – then stopped and walked off. The tour ended a week later.

Nevertheless, Mitchell turned to Guerin for drumming when she recorded *Hejira*, named after the Arab word for a journey of escape, and *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter*. "Later on, my wife and I went to dinner with Joni," Bennett says. "She was talking how John just loved women. It caused a lot of heartache for her." But ➢

Robert Trujillo and Mitchell, 2014; (bottom) Jaco Pastorius at work.

"He was Super-cool."

METALLICA BASS MAN Robert Trujillo ON THE STAR OF HIS NEW MOVIE, LATE JAZZ BASSIST (AND KEY JONI COLLABORATOR) Jaco Pastorius.

"Around 1978 I started to hear about this bass player, Jaco; one-word, four letters. An older friend, a bass player, turned me onto Weather Report's *Heavy Weather*. The picture of this Jaco guy on the back of that album was really… exotic. There was a mystique to him. Soon after, I heard his first solo album. That track, Portrait Of Tracy, blew my mind because I couldn't figure out what instrument I was hearing. It had the same effect on me as Van Halen's Eruption.

I first went to see Jaco live in 1979 at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium. It changed my life. He was super-cool. He looked like the surfers and skateboarders I grew up with in Dogtown. He took command of this audience of old jazzers, heavy metal kids, punks… The energy that surrounded him was enthralling. He had this edge, this attitude. Creatively, it made me realise there are no rules. It's wide open.

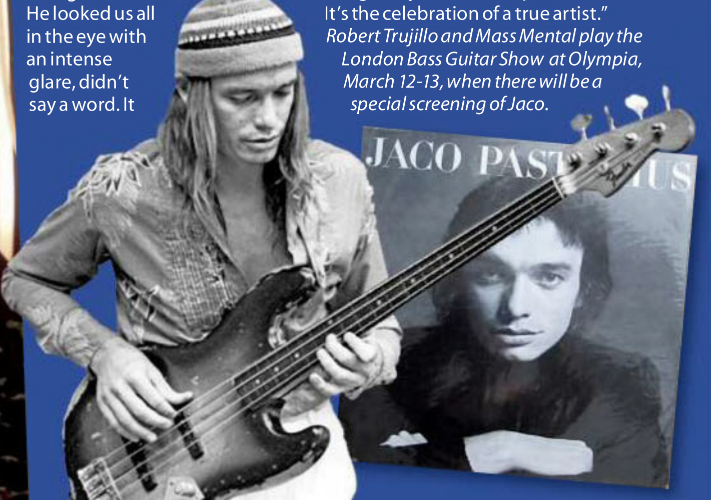
I'd always appreciated Joni Mitchell's music but then I heard what she'd done with Jaco as collaborator on *Hejira*, *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter* and *Mingus*. I was blown away. It's Jaco sharing terrain, catering to the creativity of someone else, but he's still present, turns it into its own art-piece.

When he died I was at my friend's home studio, creating music inspired by Jaco. It was very sad. There's been lots of stories about his personal life, lots of rumours… I'd seen him play at The LA Guitar Show, sitting in a room. He looked us all in the eye with an intense glare, didn't say a word. It was beautiful, like he was psyching us out. Then his girlfriend came in, this beautiful surfer girl, with a beer in each pocket, and said, 'C'mon Jaco, let's go,' and he put the bass down and walked out. It was amazing, to have your idol glare you in the eyes.

In 1996 I met Johnny Pastorius, Jaco's eldest son. He'd bought a round of drinks at a Fort Lauderdale bar where a surfer friend of mine worked. He sees the name on the credit card and says, 'My friend's a bass player and there's a guy called Pastorius who's his biggest influence.' Johnny says, 'That's Jaco, my father.' A year later I met Johnny and said, You've got to make a film about your father – his story is so important. He starts working on one. Years go by and I'm invited onto the project. I realised it's going to take money, time, passion… It pulled me in.

Every year we'd show rough cuts. Six years of hard work. Joni didn't come on until year four. We kept re-editing, but it made for something very special. The director, Paul Marchand, was amazing. We could have easily created a tragic story but there was so much to celebrate. He wasn't on this planet long but he made a powerful statement. If there'd been better understanding of his addiction, his bi-polar disorder, there's a chance he'd still be around – at the time people didn't understand what was going on. But we wanted the film to be a celebration. Now, young kids approach me and say, 'I'm now a Jaco Pastorius fan. I went and bought *Hejira*.' That's important to me. It's the celebration of a true artist."

Robert Trujillo and Mass Mental play the London Bass Guitar Show at Olympia, March 12-13, when there will be a special screening of Jaco.



JONI MITCHELL

Joni as 'Art Deco', her name for the Don Juan drag, sizes up Henry Diltz's wife Elizabeth at Lee Sklar's Halloween, November 1976; *Reckless Daughter* album sleeve (inset).

Make mine *Mingus*: (above, from left) Peter Erskine, Joni, Jaco Pastorius, Herbie Hancock, 1978; (below) Joni and Herbie, 1978.

≺ searching and musicianship were, Bennett suggests, more important for her. "She had gotten over it. It was back to reality."

Mitchell had also discovered Jaco Pastorius, a Florida-born electric-bass whiz who joined the fusion supergroup Weather Report in 1974 and was recommended to Mitchell by Ford. "For the first eight albums or so, I was directing bass players and annoying them to death," Mitchell said later. "I wanted them to stop putting dark polka dots all over the bottom and instead treat it like a symphony."

Pastorius's elegant, fluid assertion, threading the guitars and percussion in *Hejira*'s opening farewell Coyote (with its deceptively casual allusion to Guerin) and the bleak, frantic Black Crow, was a signature departure for Mitchell. "Jaco was more than overt, any time he worked with Joni," claims Peter Erskine, who joined Pastorius in the Weather Report backfield in 1978. "But I loved the majesty of her tunes with Jaco."

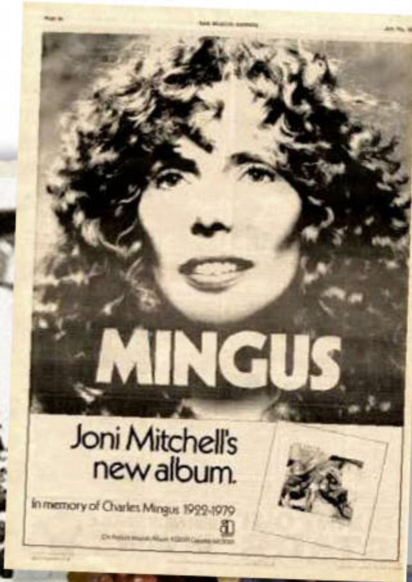
In the side-long Paprika Plains on *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter*, Pastorius is a vital, grounding complement to the soprano-sax flight of Weather Report's Wayne Shorter and Michael Gibbs' orchestral impressionism. "Joni was very clever as well as poetic," Erskine says, in her use of Pastorius. "It was a brilliant, fortuitous choice."

Ford recorded tracks with Pastorius and Guerin for *Don Juan* that, he says, "wound up not being on the record. They weren't songs, just blues jams – instrumentals that she wanted to use as source music." Mitchell was "thinking very cinematically in those days," sometimes in ways that, Ford admits, confounded him. He points to the insertion of the sultry, romantic fantasy Centerpiece – another tune from that 1962 Lambert, Hendricks & Ross album, written by Hendricks with trumpeter Harry 'Sweets' Edison – in the middle of *The Hissing*'s Harry's House, Mitchell's eerie rendering of a destructive relationship.

"It was intense," Ford says of playing on Harry's House. "I was trying to match what was going on emotionally in that song. I was trying to accomplish intensity – actually, I accomplished irritation," he adds, laughing. "I'm sure she picked up on that." The same night, later in the session, Ford played acoustic guitar on Centerpiece.

"We got a successful take and went into the control room," where Mitchell and Guerin started talking about splicing the songs together.

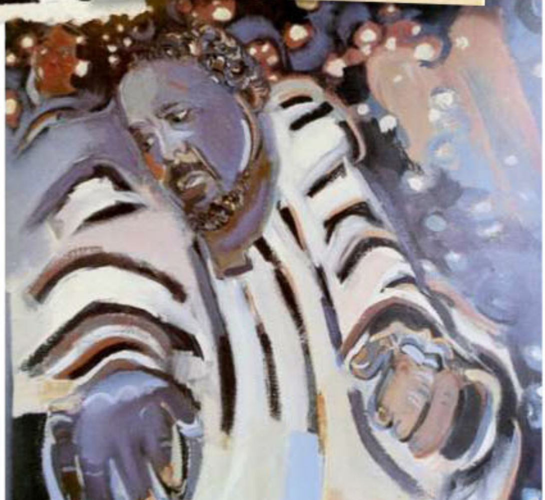
Joni and Wayne Shorter, again at A&M studios during the *Mingus* sessions, 1978; (bottom, from left) Joni and Herbie on-stage, Berkeley Jazz Festival, California, September 1978; Joni and Charles Mingus, '78; inside sleeve to *Mingus*, painted by Mitchell.



MINGUS

Joni Mitchell's new album.

In memory of Charles Mingus 1922-1979



"That shift in the bass line – John's eyes just lit up," Ford says, "and Joan goes, 'Wow, that sounds cool.' She looked at me and said, 'Robben, what do you think?' I'm like, Oh, man, you're messing up a beautiful song." The guitarist laughs. "I said things like that to her often. Of course, it's great. The whole thing works as a performance, great art from a great artist." Ford laughs again. "Everything I said to her was completely wrong. And she was always right."

CHARLES MINGUS WAS 56 AND TERMINALLY ILL with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease (after the late New York baseball star) when a friend played him *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter* in early 1978. The bassist was intrigued by the cover – Mitchell in drag as a black man – and the extended improvising in Paprika Plains. Mingus – who had played with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker and written the landmark compositions Goodbye Pork Pie Hat and Haitian Fight Song but could no longer grip his instrument – contacted Mitchell, asking her to collaborate with him on a musical adaption of T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets.

ASYLUM RECORDS
JONI MITCHELL
GOD MUST BE A BOOGIE MAN
STEREO

She passed. Instead, the two worked together on a set of Mingus melodies, among his last, to which Mitchell wrote lyrics and vocal treatments.

"I felt this kind of sweet giddiness when I met him," Mitchell told Cameron Crowe. "Charles put on this one record, and just before he played it, he said, 'Now this song has five melodies going all at once.' I said, Yeah, I bet you want me to write five different sets of words for each one of those melodies, right? And he grinned and said, 'Right.'"

"Charles put on this record, and just before he played it, he said, 'This song has five melodies going all at once.'"
Joni Mitchell

Despite his worsening condition, Mingus attended a few, initial sessions for the album that would bear his name, held at Electric Lady Studios in New York, where Mitchell was leading shifting casts of Hall of Fame jazzmen: saxophonists Phil Woods and Gerry Mulligan; bassists Eddie Gomez and Stanley Clarke; guitarist John McLaughlin and drummer Tony Williams.

By the late summer of 1978, Mingus was in Mexico with his wife Sue, vainly pursuing alternative treatments, and Mitchell was in Los Angeles, re-recording most of the album with her own version of Weather Report – with Herbie Hancock on keyboards instead of Joe Zawinul. "The vibe I got," Erskine says, "was that she was being humoured a little" at the New York dates, "almost like, 'Get out of our way – we're the real jazz guys.'

JONI MITCHELL
MINGUS

"Joni came by a Weather Report rehearsal," the drummer recalls, "and that might have gotten some wheels spinning."

She had been working with a pianist, Jeremy Lubbock. But on the first day of recording in LA, during a pass at Goodbye Pork Pie Hat, Mingus's eulogy for saxophonist Lester Young, Pastorius came over to Erskine "almost in this conspiratorial way and goes, 'Who is this guy? I'm going to call Herbie.' And Herbie says OK!" Erskine says, still amazed. "Now Joni has to tell Jeremy, 'Thanks, but sorry, you have to go.'"

Hancock overdubbed a new piano part on Pork Pie Hat in one take. "Then we jumped into the next song, and the one after that." Wayne Shorter came in the next day. The band, with percussionist Don Alias, cut five of *Mingus*'s six extended songs in those two days, including The Dry Cleaner From Des Moines, a tangled-brass New Orleans-style march, and the jazz warrior's reverie A Chair In The Sky ("Biding my time/In memories/Of old friends of mine/In daydreams of Birdland"). Mitchell completed her personal memoir of Mingus, God Must Be A Boogie Man, two days after his death on January 5, 1979.

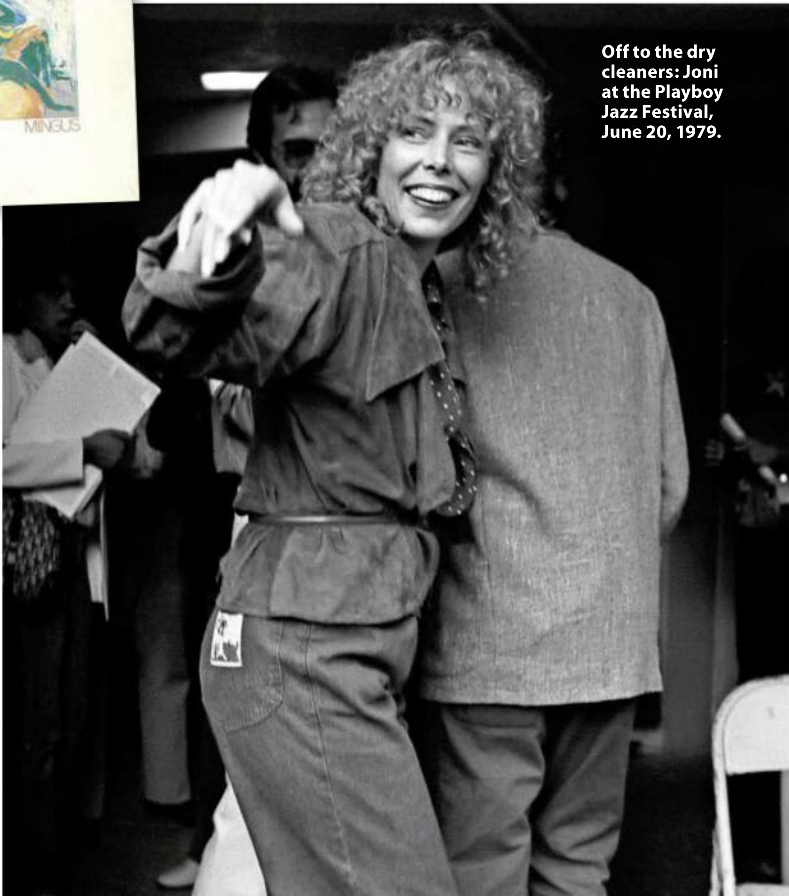
Mingus, ultimately, was not a jazz album; it was a meditation on dying, scored as a fight to leave in dignity and fulfilment. "To be honest, *Mingus* is not an easy album to listen to," Erskine says, an admission affirmed by many of its reviews. But, Erskine insists, "We knew this was something special. That was apparent. Even though we weren't in the 30th Street Studios in New York" – the legendary Columbia Records facility where Mingus made his 1959 classics *Mingus Ah Um* and *Mingus Dynasty* – "it was as if we were. Everybody knew this was something sacred."

Mitchell went on the road on behalf of *Mingus*, leading a band with Pastorius, guitarist Pat Metheny, saxophonist Michael Brecker and the a cappella vocal group The Persuasions. But it was the beginning of a long leaving.

Starting with *Court And Spark*, the singer had made five of her most compelling, uncompromised studio albums in seven years. After *Mingus*, she would not return to record until 1982's *Wild Things Run Fast*, and then issued new work between lengthening gaps over the next two decades, to diminishing sales. In 2002, Mitchell all but abdicated from the music business, calling it a "cesspool".

But at her commercial height, Mitchell found a renewing energy in jazz. The improvising camaraderie and harmonic liberation transformed her as a singer, record producer and impatiently progressive songwriter. Carlton sums up Mitchell's mid- and late '70s this way: "Right artist, right songs, right players – and the world got to hear the goodness. I'm sure she was thankful for the success of *Court And Spark*, but Joni never tried to follow it up. She went on with the creative process – and the freedom."

"Pigeonholes all seem funny to me," Mitchell said in that 1979 Downbeat interview. "I feel like one of those lifer-education types that just keeps going for letters after their name – I want the full hyphen: folk-rock-country-jazz-classical . . . so finally when you get all the hyphens in, maybe they'll drop them all, and get down to just some American music."



Off to the dry cleaners: Joni at the Playboy Jazz Festival, June 20, 1979.

Mingus session ©Peter Erskine, courtesy of his book 'No Beethoven' (3); Henry Diltz

THE LAS

IGGY POP has enjoyed a career like no other in rock'n'roll. On the eve of the release of *Post Pop Depression* – his swan song, made with **JOSH HOMME** at the controls – he invites **KEITH CAMERON** into his home for a candid, heart-baring interview…

Photography by **ANDREAS NEUMANN**

Final countdown: (from left) Matt Helders, Dean Fertita, Iggy Pop and Josh Homme.

T STAND

IT BEGAN IN MARCH 2014 WITH A SIMPLE TEXT message: "We should get together and write something sometime – Iggy."

Whatever Iggy Pop expected to occur as a result of sending those nine unambiguous words, standing ankle deep in rainwater at 10am amid the gloom of an underground hotel car park in Miami probably wasn't high on the list. While Josh Homme, the recipient of that initial text, discusses lighting and camera angles with MOJO's photographer, Iggy retreats inside his black Rolls-Royce Phantom, turns on the air-conditioning, and is enveloped by the massive car's deep-pile backseat embrace.

Iggy is 68. His back and legs are in pain, from scoliosis, cartilage loss, broken limbs – the cumulative result of heedlessly subjecting his elasticated frame to unparalleled feats of derring-do in the service of rock'n'roll for nigh on 50 years. During the previous photo set-up, he'd raised a hand and stepped out of the group line, walking over to the nearest vehicle, where he leant, hands on knees, grimacing. "Just gimme 30 seconds," he breathed.

Few would argue that Iggy Pop has earned the luxury of being the passenger. In the metaphorical driver's seat, Josh Homme is a six-foot five-inch-tall pillar of restless energy, an Iggy Pop disciple since his teens, and more than happy to direct operations. The Queens Of The Stone Age leader has produced and co-written Iggy's new album, *Post Pop Depression*, for which he put together a band comprising guitarist Dean Fertita from The Dead Weather and QOTSA, and drummer Matt Helders from Arctic Monkeys.

Not only does Homme trust them as musicians, he had to be sure they could keep a secret. This project has been kept under wraps for more than 18 months. After replying in the affirmative to Iggy's text, Homme and Iggy determined broad parameters – it should not be a heavy rock record – and traded conceptual possibilities. In late 2014, Homme sent the basic guitar outlines for two songs, which he subsequently worked on with Fertita and Helders at his own studio in Los Angeles, before he and Iggy met in January 2015 to begin work at Rancho De La Luna in Joshua Tree, the fabled birthplace of his Desert Sessions plus albums for QOTSA and the Arctic Monkeys (see Josh's account, p76). Two days in, they were joined by Fertita and Helders, and work began in earnest.

Weeks later, they had an album. Soaked in eerie primitive atmospherics, end-of-days melancholy, gallows humour and with some of the most poignantly autobiographical lyrics of his career, *Post Pop Depression* is the most sonically rich, consistent and satisfying Iggy Pop album in almost 40 years.

Iggy himself sees it as a matter of unfinished business. "Somebody the other day said to me, 'You don't need to do this – you already made it!' Oh? Nobody told me!" He laughs. "I just had a feeling. I guess it was partly to do with properly fulfilling what I reckoned my potential was. So that I didn't sit down in the mud when I'm 79 and say, 'Hey, you didn't give it a proper shot.' I have absolutely zero expectations – a couple of people have heard it and they like it, and I like it, so that's a good start. I tried my best, let's see what happens."

As for Fertita, Homme and Helders, respectively 45, 42 and 29, this was a case of fantasy made flesh: go and create magic with one of rock's last true pioneers. It was not an opportunity they undertook lightly.

"With everything he's meant to us as musicians, it's a chance to give back to that idea," Fertita says. "Hopefully this is a record that stands up to other things he's done. How many people can say that at 68 you're still making relevant rock'n'roll records? That's what my responsibility is to him."

Homme, meanwhile, seems in a permanent state of wonderment. "It's the coolest thing I've ever been a part of. I'm proud. I am excited. This record was important for my life. It's helped me. I also feel I'm not the only one it helped."

Photoshoot done, Homme gives MOJO a lift to Iggy's place, a small bungalow in El Portal, a predominantly Latino enclave north of downtown Miami. It's by no means the sketchiest locale in town, but then again, none of his neighbours in the cul de sac have a Rolls-Royce parked on their driveway.

"Iggy said to me once, 'I like to drive through the ghetto with the roof down!'" Josh laughs as we arrive. Inside, Iggy offers tea – Harrods Christmas blend or herbal – and accompanies MOJO on a tour of the house. It's cosily cluttered with books, musical instruments, photographs and artworks, though in lesser numbers than previously: "We had a break-in here a few years ago, and then they tried again this year, so I took all the good stuff out," Iggy explains. He rarely stays overnight here now: as a rule, unless he's touring, by 9pm he'll be tucked up with wife Nina in his other Miami abode.

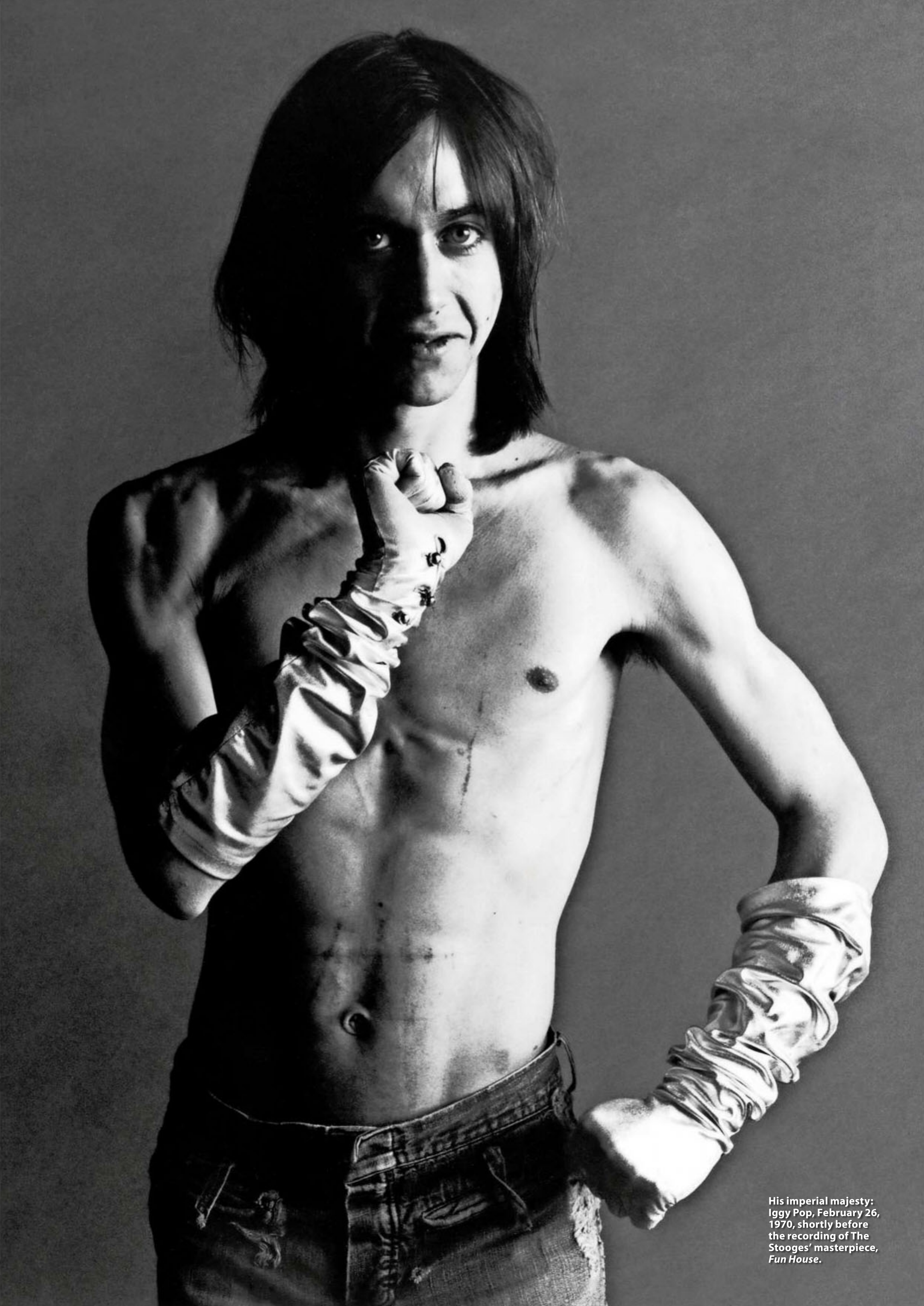
Amid some striking examples of the '80s New York art new wave, notably the voluptuously blue Princess Pamela, a life-size doll by Greer Lankton, Iggy is particularly fond of "Norman": a medieval throne chair purchased from Sotheby's for $12,000, the proceeds from an otherwise disastrous "cynical corporate tour" in 1997 sponsored by the United States Tobacco Company, from which Iggy escaped after dislocating his arm. "All I got out of the tour was that chair! It's a beautiful piece." He rubs the carved pine lovingly. "What I liked about it was that it looks like it's been through the war and it's still going."

The house is effectively a boy's den, stuffed with mementoes of a life in music, during which Iggy Pop has been both the instigator of greatness and an agent of disaster, sometimes simultaneously. He points to a photograph of himself with artist and sound poet Brion Gysin – "I'm extremely drunk and stoned, and Brion's egging me on because he's a naughty boy" – taken in Paris in 1977: at the peak of his European renaissance period, immediately after releasing *The Idiot* and shortly before *Lust For Life*, the extraordinary albums he made with David Bowie which continue to reverberate through today's future-pop blueprints. Nearby there's a poignant group shot from 2007, Iggy on his 60th birthday surrounded by the touring entourage for The Stooges, including the now deceased Ron and Scott Asheton, the streetwise brothers who turned James Osterberg Jr into Iggy Stooge, the definitive rock'n'roll animal and Ur-punk rock totem. It came more than 30 years later than they'd hoped, but the success of The Stooges' reunion finally saw the band receiving real-time adulation and financial recompense when it had seemed posthumous legend was their only guaranteed legacy.

Finally, Iggy leads MOJO past a 1925 Jules Leleu walnut settee and gestures towards the next room: "I'll show you my parents." And indeed, beneath two photographs on a sideboard, surrounded by religious artefacts and family heirlooms, sit the remains of Louella and James Osterberg Sr. Iggy's voice fal- ➢

"SOME PEOPLE FIND HUMOUR IN THE FACT THAT I PLAYED A VACUUM CLEANER – I PLAYED IT WELL. IT SOUNDED FUCKING GREAT IN MY HANDS."

Getty Images



His imperial majesty: Iggy Pop, February 26, 1970, shortly before the recording of The Stooges' masterpiece, *Fun House*.

FUCKED
MORLEY

“YOU GET TIRED OF JUDGING YOURSELF, YOU GET TIRED OF BEING JUDGED BY OTHERS.”

ters. “Very nice people. Their families were both entirely impoverished by the Depression, they never got over that. So all their lives, they were very careful.” Iggy laughs. “Not me! Well, you know… ” He looks down. “They were wonderful, I miss them very much, I really do.”

We walk through the back garden to a tiki hut that would normally offer shade from the sun, but today is a shelter from the still simmering rain-clouds. Iggy points out the muddy creek beyond the back fence and says an iguana lives nearby. Mentioning this reminds him that a member of his first band, The Iguanas, recently reconnected via Facebook.

“The name was Sam Swisher, we did our rehearsals in his basement. He was a little bit haughty – the whole family was, they were tall, successful people. He wanted to play instrumentals like Perfidia or Tequila, but I wanted to do Ray Charles. When I’d play too much drums he’d say, ‘That’s kitchenware. Cut down on that’.”

But it was thanks to Swisher’s business savvy and family connections that in 1965 The Iguanas broke out of playing frat parties around Ann Arbor and became the house band at a teen dance club, the Ponytail, on Lake Michigan, thereby giving the 18-year-old drummer Jim Osterberg his first addictive taste of stardust, from whence he graduated to The Prime Movers and then The Stooges. “The Iguanas backed up The Shangri-Las, and The Four Tops, all these people,” Iggy says. “We opened for The Kingsmen. You learn a lot that way. I was into it – I had shoulder-length blonde hair by the end of the summer. I went back to college and tried for one semester. I was miserable. So I said, Fuck it.”

Whatever past contretemps occurred between him and Sam Swisher seem to have receded from memory. “I might try to hook up with him. He was a nice boy, kinda.”

Iggy looks tired. He was up at an unusually wee hour last night, after filming an promotional video for the new album with celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain – a friend of Homme’s – inevitably led to late dinner. He says that *Post Pop Depression* will be his last album – certainly the last he’ll make via mainstream industry channels, the last time he’ll undertake all this show-and-tell. “I’m getting near the end of being able to handle stuff at that level, without having some sort of gastric attack!” Iggy laughs, pointing MOJO towards a chair and a mug of peppermint tea. “I like music. I love my DJ gig for the BBC. The rest of this *exhausts* me. It’s too much work. I’ll do another advert or something!” Despite that, for the next two hours in conversation, he reveals an appetite for self-analysis that age cannot wither.

You’re an only child – how do you think that affected your subsequent journey?

It made me lonesome and selfish, and both are potentially good for a writer and a performer respectively. Lonesome for the writer, selfish for the performer. It’s a shame being so selfish, and it’s a shame being so lonesome sometimes.

You grew up in a Michigan trailer park, but it was a solid household – your father was a teacher, your mother worked in an office – and you went to a good school in Ann Arbor alongside the children of America’s industrial elite. Did pressure to live up to a middle-class ideal send you in an alternative direction?

I think I intuited the only way I was going to beat those kids was to wiggle out of my position. I saw how things were set up in America. I saw their

Matt Helders (11)

Home on the range: recording *Post Pop Depression* at Rancho De La Luna, Joshua Tree, California, early 2015, photographed by Matt Helders. "It's a modest desert home," says Iggy. "Matt had the drums at one end, I was at the other end, Dean and Josh were in the middle. We were having breakfast together, getting to know each other, working 10 'til 5."

houses, I saw the way they acted, the way their parents acted. My father had made a passing comment – heh, you're going to love this one – when I was at high school. We'd just seen a singer and an actress on television, and he said, "These entertainers are the new aristocracy". I think that made an impression on me. All of a sudden I had a format through band life. Before that, I'd been interested in politics, public speaking, debating – I was pretty decent at that. I was on the debate team for a while, I wasn't bad. But I was not happy – when [John F.] Kennedy got shot, that was not a great day for me. I looked around and the high school building was like a prison. I realised, "If I join the system I'm gonna be here forever. I don't want to be here. I want to be free."

How might your life have turned out if you had played within the system?

I would imagine that by 50 I would have been somebody with some sort of jagged legal career, at least one ex-wife, and probably two or three internal health issues. One of those guys. Not without wherewithal, but I don't think it would have been quite right for me.

IRONICALLY, BY THE TIME HE TURNED 50, in 1997, Iggy Pop did have one ex-wife, would shortly have two, and heaven knows how his mind and body had survived the ravages of drug addiction. Such was the hand-to-hand combat reality of The Stooges and dealing with the aftermath of the band's second, fatal, collapse, in 1974. Iggy stumbled around Los Angeles, strung out, homeless and broke, careering from one abortive career reboot to the next, interspersed by rehab in a psychiatric clinic.

With hindsight, such turbulence was inevitable from the day charming, personable Jim Osterberg, the "boy most likely to succeed" according to his junior high school peers, began inveigling his way into the orbit of the surly, reprobate Asheton brothers by repeatedly showing up at their house with marijuana. "They tolerated me, they were just nice enough. It was not like, 'Hey Jim! Good morning!' But they did tolerate me."

His courtship of the Ashetons was driven by a potent cocktail of romance and pragmatism. Scott Asheton wanted to be a drummer but Iggy saw the younger brother's smouldering Hollywood bad-boy beauty as the natural front for their putative band. Ron, meanwhile, had an aptitude for the crude dynamics of rock guitar – and delinquency. He briefly got a gig playing bass in The Prime Movers, but was fired for persistently showing up late. "Ron was a rock kid," says Iggy. "They weren't having that." Although Iggy enjoyed playing blues with The Prime ➢

ESSENTIAL IGGY POP #1

IGGY POP

The Idiot

(RCA, 1977)

Lust For Life

(RCA, 1977)

Josh Homme: "Iggy's made five records that are perfect from start to finish. Play *Raw Power*, then play the craziest band in the world, and we'll see who's got more fight and fuck. *Raw Power* sounds insane. People say, 'I think it sounds weird…' What is it supposed to sound like, a fucking Shania Twain record?! It's called *Raw Power*, it's The Stooges, and there's a whole bunch of other shit you probably don't know too…

But the best, I would have to say, is *The Idiot* and *Lust For Life*, which I consider as one whole. They came out in one year and they're the Yin-Yang of each other. Those are the ones that are the most important to me – because of where I was at and what hearing them did to me. I was just at a pivotal point in my life. I was a little disillusioned with Kyuss. We'd painted ourselves into a corner with too many rules. We had a great work ethic, it was like a religion, but with rules, rules, rules. Why? I was having issues about whether I even wanted to do this. Sometimes it all gets a bit silly. I wanted to get to an emotional understanding. So when I heard that, when I heard The Passenger – that was it. I needed to hear that, just so I can relax. There's so much comedy on those records. Like, Nightclubbing. It's so making fun of this, of *all* of this. It doesn't need to say, fucking hipster'. It's just gone – 'Yep. That's funny!' And of course, Success. When he sings 'Here comes my Chinese rug!', it's funny. It's sick. I felt that exact same way.

When I was doing Kyuss I didn't listen to music, on purpose, because I didn't want to be influenced. Kyuss was a weird time, almost like being in a cult. You had to pull yourself out – and once I had, *Lust For Life* was the first thing I listened to. I was like, *That's* what I wanted to say and that's better than I wanted to say it. So I stopped playing for a while. I eventually came to realise that you've got to say it your way. This is about your journey. Don't get in the way of your own fun. I don't have guilty pleasures, because I don't want to feel bad. Just enjoy it."

As told to Keith Cameron

IGGY POP
The Idiot
Iggy Pop
Lust For Life

Movers, he felt constricted by their leader Michael Erlewhine's severe demeanour and the band's rather academic approach, which although suited to the intellectual pretensions of their collegiate audiences, lacked the fire and brimstone that Iggy heard on records by Magic Sam or Little Walter. A stint playing clubs on Chicago's West Side in the winter of 1966 under the auspices of his hero, blues drummer Sam Lay, was educational, not least because it taught him that for all the benefits of pedagogic rigour, his future lay in harnessing more instinctive energies.

"I realised I was not a double-fisted handful of man with black power, but I thought, We could take what they're doing and try to combine it with a free-thinking approach."

As first configured, The Psychedelic Stooges were a pretty far-out prospect even by the standards of 1967: a druggy noise-installation comprising a food blender, a vacuum cleaner, Iggy's golf shoes, a Hawaiian steel guitar with all the strings tuned to E, Dave Alexander battering Ron Asheton's bass amp and Scott Asheton playing miked-up 55-gallon oil drums with mallets. According to Iggy, "We had two or three very depressive droning numbers, not unlike some of what later became known as death metal. We did a robotic flamenco piece that cleared the room pretty quickly." But only once Iggy's art attack was subsumed by Ron Asheton's stuporifically effective guitar riffs would The Stooges' sound that history now venerates develop. Even today, Iggy feels his avant-garde chops never got their due credit.

"Some people find humour in the fact that I played a vacuum cleaner – I played it well. It sounded fucking great in my hands. I didn't wake up one day and say, Hahaha – I'll play a vacuum cleaner… No. We had a simple piece of music that Ron played a certain way and I thought, If only we could get the sound of a howling wind here… Little by little we became more rockist. And yes, a lot of that was because I was hanging out with these rock boys."

Your bond with the Ashetons seems more like sibling rivalry than friendship.

I was very much pursuing a brotherhood with them. I never did get that close with Ron, but I will always credit him with being my best friend simply because this is showbiz, and he's the first person that got behind me, and invested in me when I was nobody. So he gets the star. Scotty's like a cat. He'll hang out, but he'll play you. We did become friends very late in his life, and he was always very decent to me. He was fascinated by me in an offhand way.

Yet surely they offered something that no one else had?

Really, they were just incorrigible – anyone but me would throw up their hands. That's all I can say. They tried my patience for many years. That's the truth! But they had core talent and charm, and that's what you need. I sensed they were not going to make fatal errors in judgement that other local musicians were going to make. They were not going to try to play something that sounded like a Jeff Beck solo, they were never going to do something uncool. Ron came up with these two riffs, No Fun and I Wanna Be Your Dog, and I thought, "Now we have something

Andreas Neumann (2)

THE NEW DESERT

JOSH HOMME on the method and the music on Iggy's new album. As told to **KEITH CAMERON.**

WHEN I GOT Iggy's initial text message, it made me think: what do you say to that? It's no secret that I'm a fan of Iggy's. But I had to look for the right words. I finally replied: "That would be wonderful". When we spoke, everything changed because we kind of set some ground rules. He's 68, at a spot in his life where dynamic is more important than brutalising somebody. So, let's not make a heavy record, let's make a content-heavy record. Let's not tell anybody. That way, if it sucks we can bury it in the desert. Like, I literally will dig a hole and put it in there. So there's no jeopardy, it's safe. And we'll pay for it ourselves, that way we can just do it, enjoy it.

It was all a little hard to get your head around. It would keep me awake. Then he sent me this package. He knew that *Lust For Life* was very big for me, and he said: "I'll send you some stuff to get started, some lyrics and things that are important for me… and I'll send you a breakdown of *Lust For Life*, song by song." I was like, "Holy shit." That willingness to give an insight into something that I love really meant a lot. But what do I send back? For two or three months I didn't send anything. Eventually I went, "Here are some of these pieces I have. There's going to be mistakes, they're going to be awful-sounding." I sent some lyrics too. Then I realised, I just sent shit on purpose as a way of saying let's do something! But he got it.

At every recording session, the beginning is very important because it sets the tone. It's like an omen or a talisman. You need that first song to blow up. So I have this thing, Break Into Your Heart – I was like, "You shot a bullet from *The Stooges* and then pierced *Lust For Life*, and the trajectory fell 40 years later", like a distant cousin. It had that drama. We got excited. It was keyboard-centric, and that

"YOUR LIFE CONVERGES AT THIS MOMENT YOU'VE THOUGHT ABOUT, ALL OF A SUDDEN. YOU KNOW IT WILL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN."

The sorcerer and his apprentice: "I tried to find somebody at a unique level of skill to have an exchange," says Iggy of Josh Homme.

SESSIONS

one went really well. So we were off to the races.

The first couple of days at Joshua Tree it was just the two of us. It would have been awkward otherwise. It was obvious that we needed the fewest amount of people possible. Thinking about who else to bring to this, that selection of chemistry, was important. I had a lot of ideas and I wanted to enjoy it. Matt had never played with anyone else other than Arctic Monkeys, and Matt is searching to be a great drummer. He would be a little intimidated, a little conscientious, but he's got all the ability in the world. And Dean is just a level-headed awesome motherfucker. He can play everything, but he's like, I want to listen. He's trying to play the least amount necessary to do the right thing. So that was all the band people we needed.

After two or three days of just me and Iggy, I said to them come on up. We knew it's not going to be guitar-heavy – so what's the answer to that? Why don't we start taking genteel instruments, like a steel drum, and pervert it? Dean and Matt understood. There's this thing called zero dynamic, where you play in the middle so you can get quieter or louder. You can't teach that. You have to know that's how it is. And Dean and Matt played the whole record that way. The record goes up and down, and the songs go up and down. It's fucking awesome. Your life converges at this moment that you've thought about for a long time, all of a sudden. You know it will never happen again.

POST POP DEPRESSION

JOSH HOMME's track by track breakdown.

BREAK INTO YOUR HEART

I didn't try to arrange it – it just came out like this. I had a couple of words that were maybe what I thought of Iggy: womanising, ups and downs, drugs. I had "Take it all, take it all" – but he changed that to "Take it all, break it all, fake it all, steal it all, fail them all, touch them all". I started getting the chills. That catalyst freed everybody.

GARDENIA

I had a bass-line I couldn't get out of my head. And he responded to that immediately. He told me this story: "I was in San Francisco, with Allen Ginsberg, and there was this black stripper, Gardenia. She was beautiful, a lot of body. We were both going after her but I ended up hooking up with her. But she just wanted drugs at the end of the day. She was amazing…" And that's the lyrics: "America's greatest poet was ogling you all night", that's Ginsberg. The honesty of his love lyrics – it's not wrapped in imagery, it's not smoke in the air.

AMERICAN VALHALLA

We'd talked about how the ideal of Valhalla is cool because you have to actually do something full-on to get there, you couldn't just blow yourself up and get in Valhalla – it doesn't work like that. You have to be brave. Then we were like, "I wonder if there's an American Valhalla…?" The vibraphone felt Roman, almost like opera. Here's an icon coming to the later stages of his life, the creator of punk rock, who's survived, and displayed a willingness to be himself in the face of great odds, in a band that was hated but spawned all the good bands. Those lyrics: "Lonely lonely deeds that no one sees/I've nothing but my name…" He's facing mortality and sensing none of the stuff matters. To be part of that statement felt so wonderful.

IN THE LOBBY

I said to Matt and Dean: "I want you to hear and put your brain around 'primitive', 'utilitarian', with 'efficiency' stacked on top." I was playing bass, and I said it sounds like lobby music from a swanky hotel in New York. I don't know what type of music it is actually. It seems like a deep cut, but it could be my favourite thing. He sounds like a monster. He sounds like Frankenstein: "The longer the night the shorter my leash." It's fascinating watching him do lyrics. He writes them down, fast. Like, forget what sucks, we'll concentrate on what's good, we'll get rid of that one later, but every blank is filled. Goddammit, that's the way to do it. The amount of times I've been stuck with one blank line for months. It feels like a very collaborative song all round. The fruits of tru each other.

SUNDAY

Sunday was the last song we recorded, and I thought because it's so new it might take a couple hours. He sang the whole thing in 30 minutes, and I felt awful because I was like, "That's it. What do I do now…?" The melody line seemed like the happiest thing I've ever played. And then I wanted to surprise him with the ending, where the girls join in – what would be impossible to see coming? "Got all I need and it is killing me – and you". It seemed like the centrepiece… and now you're descending.

VULTURE

He's like, "I've got one." So he played acoustic and sang, and that's the take. We just built around it, but there's something to that ricketiness and out-of-tune-ness. It's about putting the right frame around that picture. Vulture is the ultimate scarred-up opportunist, I love the sentiment. He sent me a video of him with his bird – he has a bird, Biggy. Biggy and Iggy. He's singing and the bird's squawking, it's a good video. I like working with people and having this positive friction that sends something in a direction it would not have gone.

GERMAN DAYS

When he sent me the *Lust For Life* breakdown, I was thinking about Iggy living in West Berlin, in such a dramatic moment of history, and we talked about German culture, the Cabaret drama. There's a Bugs Bunny cartoon, it's Bugs with Elmer Fudd and they're doing Wagner – "Kill the rabbit!" – and it's so dramatic, but it's funny. This song was the epitome of a primitive-native mix that we were talking about, and he just said, "This could be German Days". It's got the "Kill the rabbit!" drama. It's confusingly jarring. But groovy as fuck.

CHOCOLATE

I had that riff for nine years. He really was attached to it, but I couldn't hear it. He was hearing it like a soul song, almost like a Motown record. Once I let go of what I'd thought it should be for nine years, I heard what he was hearing. That lyric is so intense. "When your love of life is an empty beach, don't cry/When your enemy has you in his reach, don't die". It's so different for both he and I, too, a song like that. Those lyrics are hopeful, but so from *that* perspective.

PARAGUAY

When he played that, the lyrics killed me. "I just couldn't take no more/Of whipping fools and keeping score". The fact that the record ends with this song, where he's going out to the jungle like Colonel Kurtz, seemed very fitting. Then I had this other part, like a slave chant, and all of a sudden he starts talking over it. We only played it five times, and he had five different rants, a very earnest go-fuck-your-self. Improvised. I was like, "Did you just tell whoever was listening to go and fuck off?!" We actually debated if that's what we should do. Then I just said, "Yeah – it's not like it's from somebody that doesn't matter."

"I've nothing but my name": Iggy Pop enjoys a glimpse of American Valhalla.

Desert rats: the *Post Pop Depression* band (clockwise from top left) Matt Helders, Dean Fertita, Iggy Pop and Josh Homme.

⮜ going on." It wasn't the Bible, it wasn't The Velvet Underground, it wasn't The Who – but it was better than everything else. We went from there. By the time of *Fun House*, I could do that myself, and Ron's big contribution was the riff to TV Eye. The three of them played the shit out of that material; [saxophonist Steve] Mackay too. That was that – I popped a lot of acid to write those songs and that's hard on your nervous system, so I ended up with a junk problem, an idealism problem, a money problem."

SHUNNED, RIDICULED, SOMETIMES violently assaulted during their lifetime, the creation of The Stooges' legend *in memoriam* rivals even that of The Velvet Underground. But while punk conferred godhead status upon Iggy Pop, the recurring patronage of David Bowie ensured his influence would transcend genre. Indeed, it was the albums Iggy and Bowie recorded together in mid-'70s Berlin that most impacted upon the teenage Josh Homme [see panel p77].

In mid-2014, while they were still discussing what record they might make, and how, Iggy Pop extended to Josh Homme a typically old-fashioned courtesy by way of affirming his intentions were serious and honourable: he sent a song-by-song breakdown of *The Idiot* and *Lust For Life*. "When that arrived, my wife cried because she knew how much that meant to me," Homme says.

The dossier contained technical details, authorial attributions and personal anecdotes. "He had expressed an interest in those albums," says Iggy, "so as well as what kind of saxophone was used on Tiny Girls, I included details that most people wouldn't consider. I explained who wrote what bit – like, 'Actually on this one I had the chord progression and David Bowie gave me a title and then I came up with the lyric but then he came up with a chorus', et cetera – and also that Dennis Davis, George Murray and Carlos Alomar were very good natured and would tease me all the time by singing 'Iggy is a punk rocker' whenever they saw me. You know, things like that."

Recorded in France, Munich and West Berlin, *The Idiot*'s dystopic cabaret has been as influential as anything by The Stooges, and certainly more financially rewarding for Iggy: its songs have been covered by Grace Jones and R.E.M., among many others, plus most famously by David Bowie himself, whose version of China Girl is considerably better known than the original. That it was followed so soon by the ebullient *Lust For Life* confirms the exalted speed of Iggy's rollercoaster existence. Just 18 months prior to the latter album's August 1977 release, he had been living like a derelict, with his most recent recordings, the *Kill City* album, languishing unreleased in apparent confirmation of his pariah status. Iggy's Berlin diptych was less reinvention or comeback, but a resurrection.

"Because I'm open-minded," he explains. "Who could have imagined I'm gonna do something like Sister Midnight or China Girl? But I'm an emotional person so I'm reactive to music, it doesn't matter what kind it is. I like Sinatra. I like Ravel. I like Charlie Parker and I like Prefuse 73. If you put some of it in front of me I'm gonna want to touch it. Sometimes you bump into gifts, because there are gifts all around you. Damn, listen to what Dennis Davis is playing on Sister Midnight, it's a triple-time on the cymbal and a half-time on the 'whack' – it's insane! The atmosphere was so creative."

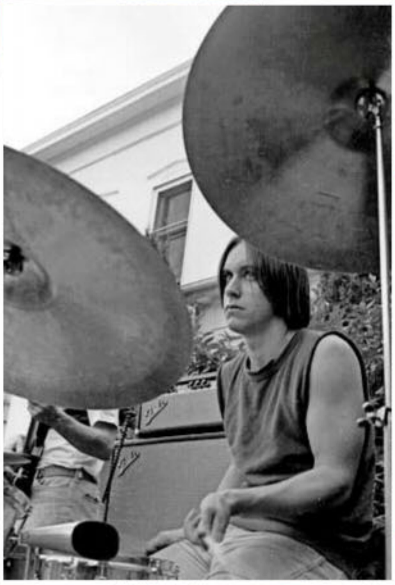
MOJO's interview takes place on December 5, 2015: a month before David Bowie's death. Iggy would subsequently reflect fondly on his friendship with the man whose apartment at 155 Hauptstrasse in Berlin he shared during 1976-77. "[Bowie] salvaged me from certain professional and maybe personal annihilation… He did a good thing."

The most tantalising aspect of Iggy's Berlin Bowie albums is how the energy dissipated almost as quickly as it had arrived. Such intense alchemy was probably unsustainable, but within months Iggy had been dropped by RCA, beginning another period of personal struggle and artistic pinballing, as successive albums – *New Values*, *Soldier*, *Party* and *Zombie Birdhouse* – saw him paired with various combinations of musicians and producers (James Williamson, Glen Matlock, Ivan ➢

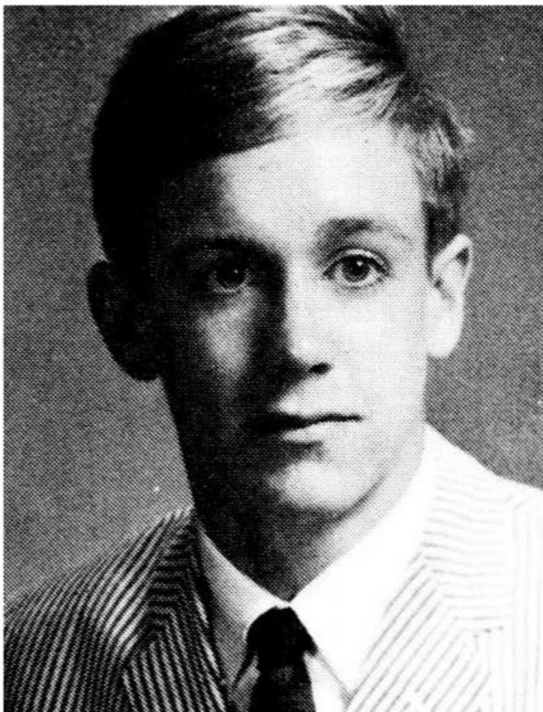
"I NEVER DID GET THAT CLOSE WITH RON ASHETON, BUT I WILL ALWAYS CREDIT HIM WITH BEING MY BEST FRIEND SIMPLY BECAUSE HE'S THE FIRST PERSON THAT GOT BEHIND ME, AND INVESTED IN ME WHEN I WAS NOBODY."

Seth Poppel/Yearbook Library, Photoshot, Bob Gruen, Getty (2), Sebastian Mlynarski

THE IGUANAS
IGUANAS



Escape from the reptile house: (clockwise from above) Iggy and Roller chez Miami, 2005; Iggy joins the Neurotic Outsiders (featuring Duff McKagan, Steve Jones and John Taylor) at the Viper Room, West Hollywood, September 1995; James Osterberg in his senior year at Ann Arbor High School, 1965; David Bowie and Iggy go all Andy Capp for The Idiot UK Tour, March 1977; Iggy and Debbie Harry looking swell for Chris Stein's camera at Stein's New York exhibition, May 1982; The Iguanas ready to rip it up (from left) Don Swickerath, Sam Swisher, Jim McLoughlin, Jim Osterberg, Nick Kolokithas; The Stooges in their prime, May 23, 1970, at Elektra Sound Recorders, Los Angeles, during the making of *Fun House* (clockwise from left) Dave Alexander, Scott Asheton, Ron Asheton, Iggy Pop; Jim Osterberg playing with The Prime Movers but dreaming of Rock Action, in a front garden on State Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1966.



JIM VERSUS IGGY

His new LP is personal. **PHIL ALEXANDER** picks 10 more moments when Mr Pop's mask drops...

1 DUM DUM BOYS

(from The Idiot, 1977)

Throughout a career than spans six decades Jim Osterberg has always wrestled with his self-created alter-ego. At times, the sensitive Osterberg has won out, a case in point being this track from Iggy's Bowie-produced solo debut, where our protagonist surveys the wreckage of The Stooges. His opening faux conversation chronicles the deaths of bassists Zeke Zettner ("dead on Jones, man") and Dave Alexander ("OD'd on alcohol") before moving on to drummer Scott 'Rock Action' Asheton ("living with his mother") and guitarist James Williamson ("He's gone straight"). Only Iggy's "best friend", guitarist Ron Asheton, remains unscathed.

2 FALL IN LOVE WITH ME

(from Lust For Life, 1977)

Iggy met 21-year-old Esther Friedmann at a fashion show party shortly after arriving in Berlin in 1976. Friedmann was still living with her surgeon boyfriend but Iggy remained undeterred, and she became his muse before the pair finally got together. Their relationship was still young when Iggy recorded this stomping track born out of a loose-limbed jam with improvised vocals and Bowie on organ. Iggy's endless exhortation to "fall in love with me" clearly worked, as he and Friedmann embarked on a relationship that lasted seven years.

3 I'M BORED

(from New Values, 1979)

The punk explosion of the previous three years meant that music had finally caught up with Iggy, and yet he appeared to find little comfort in that. The anthemic I'm Bored – clearly an influence on Mudhoney and the grunge snarks who would emerge 10 years later – reflected the uncertainty about his place in this new world. His angst is most obviously displayed in the final section of the song where he mixes self-analysis with self-loathing, spitting out a succession of telling lines: "I'm sick/I'm sick of all my kicks /I'm sick of all the stiffs/I'm sick of all the dips."

4 EGGS ON PLATE

(from Party, 1981)

Three albums into his deal with Arista Records – then run by Clive Davis – and there was still no sign of a hit record for Iggy. *Party*, however, was intended to be it, with Thom Panunzio – the man who'd helped Patti Smith score a hit with Because The Night – drafted in to produce. Smith's guitarist and bassist, Ivan Kral, was also brought in to write songs. Iggy, however, was mentally in a dark place, and it showed on what was, at best, an inconsistent new wave album. Musically, Eggs On Plate is a good example of that, while Jim Osterberg appeared to look in and take issue with the idea of becoming a pop star. "I'll put you on the hit parade/Everybody will know your name/Iggyyyyy!" he snarls, before adding: "But, man – Hey! Solomon/Who does my name belong to then?"

5 ORDINARY BUMMER

(from Zombie Birdhouse, 1982)

Signed by Blondie's Chris Stein to his Animal label and afforded a $50,000 advance, Iggy set out to make a provocative record. *Zombie Birdhouse* was the result, a flawed collection that nevertheless underlined Iggy's restless spirit. The frayed Ordinary Bummer, however, was a tender moment full of reflection where Jim Osterberg admitted that he wanted to "hold out for summer days" while watching the world through "sad old eyes – the sound of a man trying to take stock of his life but afraid of what he might find.

6 SHADES

(from Blah Blah Blah, 1986)

Following the commercial failure of *Zombie Birdhouse*, Iggy reunited with David Bowie for *Blah Blah Blah*, his first for his new label, A&M. Having observed Iggy's delight at receiving a new pair of sunglasses from Suchi, his wife of two years, Bowie wrote this song for his friend, method acting his way through Pop's emotional response. As a result, even if not all the lyrics are his, Iggy's performance is absorbing and heartfelt on a track whose sheer poignancy cannot be ruined by its dated Linn drum sound.

7 I WON'T CRAP OUT

(from Brick By Brick, 1990)

"I'm standin' in a shadow/Hating the world..." begins a wistful, 43 year-old Iggy on a track that once again sees himself questioning his place in music following the advent of grunge. The track itself displays the odd lyrical clunk and is a little uneven musically, but the 'no sell-out' sentiment is beautifully carried by Pop's voice. The result is a tune that sounds like a note-to-self on the ongoing juxtaposition of fame versus genuine mainstream success – an irony bearing in mind that Iggy's duet with The B-52's' Kate Pierson on *Brick By Brick*'s Candy yielded his first and only Top 40 US hit.

8 FUCKIN' ALONE

(from American Caesar, 1993)

Despite now being hailed as a genuine alternative icon, again Iggy elected to reflect on the increasingly disposable culture he saw emerging around him. His sense of alienation is evident in his lyrics that are set to a series of experimental beats and brooding, dissonant sonic textures. "I'm so fuckin' alone!" croons Iggy on what is the nearest the track comes to a chorus, refuting his revered status before accepting, "OK, OK, this is me." His restlessness, however, remains intact in the wake of that resolution.

9 'TIL WRONG FEELS RIGHT

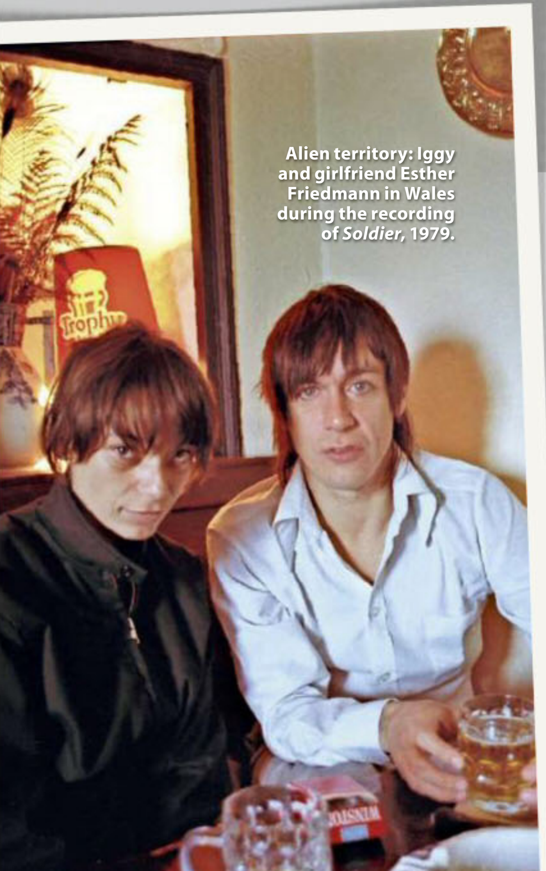
(from Skull Ring, 2003)

A teenage blues aficionado, Iggy fell back in love with the genre via the music of Mississippi men R.L. Burnside and Junior Kimbrough. As he reconnected with The Stooges, he cut tracks for a tribute album to the latter, but also found himself writing this sparse tune on an acoustic guitar. Again, the lyrics see the man railing against anodyne modern music as well as then falsehoods of the industry as a whole. "They're gonna push it/ Until wrong feels right," he asserts, on an album that also saw him collaborating with Green Day, Sum 41 and Peaches.

10 I WANT TO GO TO THE BEACH

(from Préliminaires, 2009)

Inspired by controversial French author Michel Houellebecq's 2005 novel, The Possibility Of An Island, Iggy's fifteenth studio album saw him delve into neo-jazz territory and throwing in a couple of standards for good measure. The escapist sentiments on this track also saw him openly confront the difference between his public persona and himself, the man laying his angst bare on the fourth verse. "You can convince the world/ That you're some kind of superstar/When an asshole is what you are," he sings, before adding a shrug of acceptance: "But that's all right."



Alien territory: Iggy and girlfriend Esther Friedmann in Wales during the recording of *Soldier*, 1979.

◄ Kral, Chris Stein) who struggled to reconfigure his mercurial qualities for the new wave-fixated mainstream. The results were mixed. Today, Iggy is philosophical.

"One thing I've learned is a group of people making music is an occasion – a social occasion, always. It's where you were, who you were with and where everybody was at in their lives at that moment. What happens inevitably is that people drift off to other areas of their possible personality. In my case, I often have a tendency to sink into vulgarity – heheheh! Sorry! But at least I know that about myself and I'm not even 70 yet! I'm getting somewhere here!"

Jim Kerr once said that when Simple Minds were at Rockfield in Wales recording their second album, they were very excited because you were also there, making *Soldier*. They knew you were having a bad time because you kept coming into their studio, as opposed to them trying to get into yours.

That's a good point. That wasn't the best. Sometimes I think there are secret protocols that the corporate record structure never shared with me, that would lead them to want another record really quickly, even though you'd just had a flop! In that case I was making 'em too fast for what I was and my energies were flagging because of too much drink on the one hand and stimulants on the other, and that shrinks the size of the middle path when you can actually function. Did you ever see the movie Cat Ballou? If Lee Marvin doesn't have a drink he can't do anything. If he has one or two drinks he can out-shoot and out-ride anyone. But if he has that third drink then off he falls! Like that, y'know?

Why do you think people like David Bowie and Josh Homme want to work with you?

I offer something different. When a person becomes both very good and very popular they need to keep doing it all the time, they get

Getty Images

Underground rockers: (from left) Josh, Iggy, Dean and Matt in Miami, December 2015.

“THE IGUANAS BACKED UP THE SHANGRI-LAS, AND THE FOUR TOPS. WE OPENED FOR THE KINGSMEN. YOU LEARN A LOT THAT WAY.”

nervous if they’re not. But they don’t want to do the same thing over and over. They need a break, but they don’t want to go fishing. That’s where I come in. You get something different with this *odd* guy. Also, I’m willing to exchange.

It’s always a creative two-way street?

Yeah. I hardly ever shoot down an idea and I will diligently work, and sometimes I come up with something interesting without ’em.

Why did you want to work with Josh?

I was looking for someone to make one last, good, formalist album with – meaning completely realised, with production and musical values that might have a chance of anybody hearing it in the ‘music scene’. Someone mentioned him and I listened to [QOTSA’s 2013 LP] …*Like Clockwork*. I thought, Ooh dear, this is very fine work. I thought it was the type of writing and arranging that could work for a vocalist other than himself. I started listening to the Desert Sessions and really enjoyed the range of it – biker blues to English pop… There was one [song] called Sheperds Pie that I thought was funny!

You’d met Josh once before, but Dean only for a quick backstage ‘hello’ and never Matt. How did you all click?

I clicked real good with Dean because he’s from Michigan, and he’s very personable. I did great with Matt because Matt doesn’t really waste a lot of chitter-chatter. He reminds me of other people I know from that part of England. He’s always listening and always available. The commentary is very crisp. Honestly, I could just listen to him play a basic beat all by himself, all day. And Josh knows the ins and outs of what’s gonna make a song work. Rancho was definitely close quarters and we also recorded at Josh’s studio, Pink Duck, in Los Angeles. It’s nice there. Copies of Viz in the loo. I love Viz. Especially Johnny Fartpants!

Do you still feel compelled to seek ‘music scene’ recognition?

Yeah, for about another six months! *(Laughs)* Then I’m giving up!

ON A SHELF IN HIS MIAMI BOLTHOLE sits the first award Iggy Pop ever received. It looks like a brick. “It *is* a brick,” Iggy giggles. “In 1990 I made *Brick By Brick*, and at the same time the National Bricks were having a crisis, nobody was using bricks to build. So they said, ‘Right, we’ll have a brick awards,’ and had this stupid ceremony in a B-list hotel in Times Square and maybe 25 people showed up. They nominated me for best use of brick in a video…”

Brick By Brick was significant, not least because it gave Iggy his first ever US hit single – Candy, a duet with The B-52’s’ Kate Pierson – and first US gold-certified album. As well as guest slots from Guns N’Roses’ Duff McKagan and Slash, it also prominently featured Jim Osterberg, who emerged after many years in Iggy’s shadow, offering wry, often tender observations on the lot of his fellow regular American citizen. “The life we lead is tricky, tricky/I love my home and my family,” he stated in Home, while the title track was Jim’s plain-spoken admonishment of Iggy: “I wanna live in peace, quietly/I wanna have a place of love and safety… So get off my dick/I’m building it brick by brick.”

I interviewed Iggy around the release of the album. Wearing glasses, dressed-down in T-shirt, jeans and sneakers, and with his au naturel hair short, he admitted that this domesticated husband still struggled to shake off naughty little Iggy. “I’m like Top Cat!” ➢

ESSENTIAL IGGY POP #2

THE STOOGES

Fun House

(Elektra, 1970)

the stooges
fun house

Dean Fertita: “I think it is the greatest rock’n’roll record. It opens doors, it makes you think about music differently. I can put it on today and get that exact same feeling as when I first heard it. That’s great art – to get the same feeling and still feel new things, and it makes you want to express yourself musically. That’s incredible, that a record would have that lasting power. And Iggy’s done that multiple times. We always say, anybody can do one or two things but to sustain it over a long period of time? He is a picture of consistency. I saw an interview once where he was talking about what The Stooges do as a band: ‘We build things so we can destroy them’. That is what I wanted when I was a kid and to still feel that from him is amazing. I’ve seen him play live multiple times. Having that be so electrifying, I can only imagine what it must have been like in 1970.”

As told to Keith Cameron

Andreas Neumann, David Swanson

Positive friction: Iggy Pop and Josh Homme reflect on the completion of *Post Pop Depression*.

Andreas Neumann

≺ he winked. "I could live anywhere!"

This afternoon in his Miami day-house, with the rain now splashing steamily on the roof of the tiki hut, Jim confirms "that Top Cat guy" is still sniffing around.

"He keeps coming back! Y'know, Iggy's a *bad* guy! Natural and life-affirming, and dangerous and threatening always to spoil the value of the artefact that I have become – and need to continue becoming if I want to survive comfortably in the world."

Perhaps Iggy's most impressive act of reinvention came in 2003, when he reformed The Stooges. Whatever the calibre of his bands at any given point during the previous 25 years, they were doomed to be judged on their performances of No Fun, 1969, I Wanna Be Your Dog, Loose, Search And Destroy – songs which in the wake of punk's posthumous deification of The Stooges had attained the status of holy texts. In the '80s, Iggy's latest David Bowie-assisted commercial retune with 1986's *Blah Blah Blah* was paralleled by The Stooges' status attaining critical mass amid indie rock circles. That it should be Mike Watt who took the late Dave Alexander's place in the reformed Stooges made perfect sense: with the Minutemen, Watt had been a catalyst for a new wave of visceral rock performers who worshipped The Stooges' blend of minimalist cool and primal fervour, a phenomenon that culminated with Nirvana. The end of the '90s saw Ron Asheton recording with Mudhoney's Mark Arm and Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore, then touring in a Stooges tribute band with Watt and J Mascis. The momentum was unstoppable.

"I found the Ashetons again because Mike Watt and his crowd unearthed them," Iggy says. "And they unearthed them because they realised there were a certain crowd of people who needed a touchstone to something rocking and cool, but that had no taint of heavy metal. No taint of the virtuoso or macho. And there were the Ashetons: perfect."

It could be argued that The Stooges tainted their own legacy by recording two further albums: 2007's *The Weirdness*, and then after Ron Asheton's death in 2009 saw the revival of the Mark II Stooges with James Williamson on guitar, 2013's *Ready To Die*. But an alternative thesis holds that those records were necessary vessels for Jim Osterberg to safely transport the spirit of Iggy Stooge out of harm's way. Just look at the two albums he made after *The Weirdness*: *Préliminaires*, a set of mostly jazz-tinged vignettes based on a novel by Michel Houellebecq, and *Après*, where Iggy turned the lights down even lower and crooned French pop standards by Piaf and Brassens.

"Those records are me," he says. "*The Weirdness* was whatever Ron Asheton wanted me to do. Both times the group reformed, it was very simple. Ron, and later Williamson, were determined that this time they were going to express themselves and that I wasn't going to get in their way. I was fine, I said I will do my best to sing to what you give me, I will not put you in a situation that you don't want. So Ron chose the situation with Steve-the-non-producer-Albini, and James chose to self-produce. I was not very comfortable in either situation but I did my duty. That doesn't mean that, after all the errors I saw other people making in those records, I didn't make errors that were equally as glaring. Because the thing is: you can't go home. Simple as that. Meanwhile, I am who I am. So I made *Préliminaires*, *Après*. And then I sought out *this* situation…"

Iggy waves at Josh Homme, who is now outside, FaceTiming his two young children.

"I tried to find somebody, somebody at a *unique* level of compositional and instrumental skill, who might have wanted to have an exchange. That's what I was after. *(Pauses)* I think there's a fuck of a lot of Osterberg on this new record."

IGGY SAYS THERE HAVE ONLY been three times this century when he's sat alone with an acoustic guitar, "and something came that was natural and moved me".

The first was 'Til Wrong Feels Right, a solo blues about the industrial grind of the record business, featured on *Skull Ring*, the 2003 collaborations album that marked The Stooges' return. Secondly, I Want To Go To The Beach, from *Préliminaires*, was written amidst the blood and thunder of the reformed Stooges' tour machine, and is a plaintive cri de coeur: "I wanna go to the deep/'Cos there's nowhere I want to be/And nobody I want to see." And the third is Paraguay, the final song on what Iggy Pop states will be the final Iggy Pop album. The protagonist dreams of escaping the rat-race, and although he realises he'll never actually get to Paraguay, his sentiment is plain: "I'm going where sore losers go/To hide my face and spend my dough/Though it's a dream it's not a lie/And I won't stop to say goodbye."

Is this really your valedictory moment?

It's feeling that way. Sometimes you feel the page turning and you're not sure how you feel about it. You're not even sure what's happening to you. But yeah, I think Josh must have picked up on that. I had written the verse and chorus for Paraguay about a year before we started making this record and that represented my emotional state. I didn't feel as well as I thought maybe I could. But you get tired of judging yourself, you get tired of being judged by others. The general intercourse of life that maybe gets a bit heightened depending how public your life gets. It's not just me.

So now, if the end is near, can we state for the record that you did it your way?

When I could. And when you can't, you serve your time then you get out and you're loose again! Everybody gets nailed once in a while and the gig's up.

Regrets?

Lots of personal regrets, but because they're personal. Lots of songs, but nothing worth dwelling on. I mean, at some point, I think it's good to have dinner, uncork a bottle of wine and just forget about it all.

Iggy laughs his last laugh and gives MOJO a little hug. Outside, Josh Homme is behind the wheel of a black 4x4. The post-Pop depression era is almost upon us.

ESSENTIAL IGGY POP #3

IGGY AND THE STOOGES

Raw Power

(Columbia, 1973)

Matt Helders: "It's the first Stooges album I heard – with Alex [Turner], in his bedroom. It felt out of reach but it also made you think you could be in a band. The music I'd heard up to then seemed expensive, like 'that's a band in London with a studio'. But *Raw Power* seemed like, 'We could do this'. Not write songs like it, but we could write some songs and make some noise. Then I got *The Stooges* – after *Raw Power* I got everything else. They were constant; one came out in '69, one in '70. I wish for the purpose of this I could blend them. I'd pick *Fun House* if I could have Gimme Danger on it. I saw The Stooges at the LA Palladium, about four years ago. A massive eye opener: Iggy still doing it the way he was in 1970, pulling his jeans down, no shirt, going wild. He put a lot of contemporary bands to shame."

As told to Keith Cameron

IGGY
RAW POWER

MOJO FILTER

YOUR GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S BEST MUSIC. EDITED BY JENNY BULLEY

richard youngs • inside the future
BÔLT
Populista presents Raphael Rogiński plays John Coltrane and Langston
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RAWHEAD & BLOODYBONES BRIAN HARNETTY
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DAViD amRam
CLASSIC AMERICAN FILM SCORES 1956-20
THE NEW WAVE
LE
DAVID BOWIE Bowie at the Bee

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"The intense, compulsive sound of a soul plugged into the planet's molten core."

KEITH CAMERON FEELS BOB MOULD'S PAIN. ALBUMS, P87

RATINGS & FORMATS

Your guide to the month's best music is now even more definitive with our handy format guide. **CD** COMPACT DISC **DL** DOWNLOAD **ST** STREAMING **LP** VINYL **MC** CASSETTE **DVD** DIGITAL VIDEO DISC **C** IN CINEMAS **BR** BLU-RAY

★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★	★	☆
MOJO CLASSIC	EXCELLENT	GOOD	DISAPPOINTING	BEST AVOIDED	DEPLORABLE

Wing and a prayer

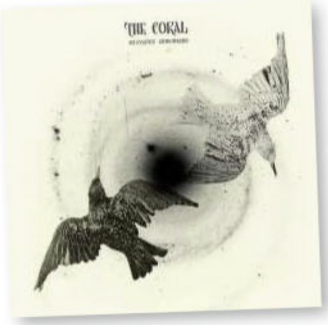
On a mission to make their 'White Album', The Coral ended up on hiatus. Five years on, they return for a dark masterpiece. By **Stevie Chick**. Illustration by **Sam Chivers**.

The Coral

★★★★

Distance Inbetween

IGNITION. CD DL LP



The story behind The Coral's eighth album begins almost half-a-decade ago, shortly after touring duties for 2010's *Butterfly House* drew to a close. Their first since parting ways with founder/guitarist Bill Ryder-Jones – who'd departed for the relative calm of a solo career after a series of panic attacks in the dressing room before gigs – the John Leckie-produced *Butterfly House* proved that, even though the amiably weird Wirral-born popniks were now reduced to a five piece, they'd lost none of their knack for deftly psychedelicised tuneage and eminently hummable rock.

For their next trick, the group stepped off the touring treadmill, booked themselves into Peter Gabriel's Real World Studio near Bath (again accompanied by John Leckie), and, with almost comical grace, ploughed headlong into a brick wall.

The concept behind what should have been The Coral's seventh album was simple: *Butterfly House* had shown that frontman James Skelly and his loyal brethren could still deliver their trademark '60s-kissed songcraft with ease; its follow-up, however, would consciously train its aim further 'out', into darker waters, far beyond any comfort zone. This wasn't the first time the group had strayed from their own wonky version of the straight-and-narrow. Their contemporaries in British indie rock's resurgent early-'00s wave might have seemed to possess little ambition beyond cashing royalty cheques from occasional soundtrack plays on Hollyoaks, but The Coral took pleasure in balancing the bright, lucid, melodic likes of their 2002 platinum-selling debut and its chart-topping 2003 follow-up *Magic And Medicine*, with the wilder and weirder *Nightfreak And The Sons Of Becker* (2004) and Geoff Barrow-produced *The Invisible Invasion* (2005).

Skelly says the group wanted to record their own *White Album*, but it turned into their *Let It Be*. Drained from their most recent sortie on the road, and a hectic decade of album-tour-album-tour toil, the group lacked energy, focus and, ultimately, songs. They exited the studio proffering not a finished album but a statement announcing their indefinite hiatus. Solo albums, side-projects and the belated 2014 release of *The Curse Of Love* (an album recorded with Geoff Barrow almost a decade before) would follow. The Coral, though, seemed to be done.

Four years on, however, Skelly and co have returned with an album that makes good on that aborted concept, drawing treasures from the darker corners of their imagination. Heavier, weirder and bleaker than anything they've released, *Distance Inbetween* is weighty but never hard work, Skelly's melodic savvy the lamplight guiding the group through these subterranean depths. The Coral have never sounded like this before, and you wonder if that initial session stumbled simply because the group weren't ready to make this record back then.

Lord knows what happened to Skelly and his compadres in the interim – the album sleeve (depicting two birds, one representing life and one death, circling a black hole) sets a stark tone – but the voice on opening track Connector scarcely sounds like the same man from *Butterfly House*. Not just older and wiser, the Skelly on Connector has evidently 'seen some shit', and it has changed him. Like many of the tracks on *Distance Inbetween*, the arrangement of Connector is anything but busy (the group had slimmed-down even further, to a quartet, when they began work, picking up second guitarist Paul Molloy mid-session), its eerie creep conjured by a slithering guitar line, a mellotron that seems to have wandered in from Kashmir, and taut motorik drums. At 2:45 that all falls away (save for a phantom synth) and we're alone with Skelly, his vocal aged, mysterious and imperial, like a Scouse Scott Walker, murmuring: "You are like the ghost that I passed along the way/An illusion of a memory that fades." Mortality, disillusionment, loss and betrayal: it's all there, in only a few precious words.

And so *Distance Inbetween* goes: grand but unsettling, beautiful but bleak. White Bird's dreamy Crosby-Stills-Nash harmonies are lent an ominous undertow by the wintery chill of its synths, its strychnine-dosed guitar breaks, and lyrics that boast of seeing "forever on the other side", as the titular bird "hits the ground". Chasing The Tail Of A Dream enters with a growling riff and Moroderesque synths, while Skelly croons like Ian McCulloch gazing into the abyss, lamenting "pages of a wasted life" as Molloy's lead guitar scares up the hex of Fleetwood Mac's Green Manalishi. On Beyond The Sun, meanwhile, Skelly is singing of feeling "like your mother's gone" and craving some sweet oblivion. The Coral's arrival in 2002 seemed to signal a Daisy Age for a then-moribund indie scene; is *Distance Inbetween* their *De La Soul Is Dead?*

It's not all majestic downers and arctic synthscapes, of course; the limber watusi of Holy Revelation moves with the smart funk of Beck, while Miss Fortune finds Skelly lending his lived-in tones to the kind of bold indie rock that could confidently play behind the highlights on Match Of The Day (though Molloy's lysergic solos might prove a fatal distraction). But much of *Distance Inbetween* plays harder and heavier than The Coral have ever attempted before, and – crucially – so much of it delivers. They draw newfound strength and substance from this weightier material, so at moments the album recalls the might of Screaming Trees' climactic *Dust*, or the haunted spook of Queens Of The Stone Age's treatise on near-death-experience, *…Like Clockwork*. It sounds like they went through a kind of hell to bring it to us, but there's little here that doesn't argue the effort was worth it.

KEY TRACKS

- Connector
- White Bird
- Holy Revelation

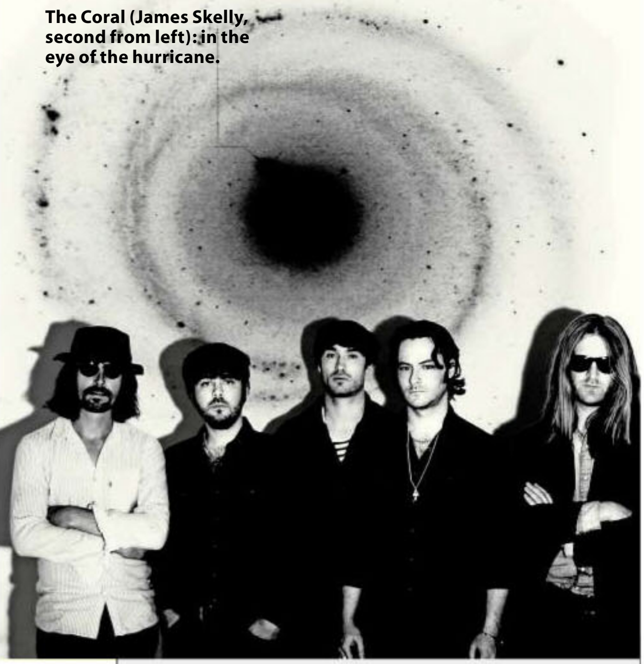
> "THE KIND OF BOLD INDIE ROCK THAT COULD HAPPILY PLAY BEHIND THE HIGHLIGHTS ON MATCH OF THE DAY."

HOME TAPING IS KILLING MUSIC

BACK STORY: TAPE HEADS

- To promote the new album's release, The Coral have announced a 'cassette tape amnesty', offering to absolve the sins of fans' shonky mix-tapes by offering to dub a *Distance Inbetween* over the offending C90. "Home taping didn't exactly kill music, but we know it caused some horrible collections of music to be compiled," said singer/guitar James Skelly, announcing the scheme. Coral fans can send in their worst old mix-tapes to the group, and the 50 most appalling cassettes will be re-dubbed and returned to their owners, no questions asked. Unlucky hopefuls, meanwhile, will be able to purchase cassette copies of the new album at their nearest record shop.

JAMES TALKS! THE CORAL'S SKELLY SR ON DOMESTIC APOCALYPSE, HAWKWIND AND BURN-OUT.



The Coral (James Skelly, second from left): in the eye of the hurricane.

"We wanted it to be like Hawkwind"

The Coral's James Skelly speaks to Stevie Chick.

You were working on a new album early in 2012, but ended up going on hiatus for four years instead. What happened?

"We were burned out. We'd toured for 12 years, non-stop, and it was just madness, basically. We just had to take an eight-count, really; everyone just needed to do their own thing. Ian [Skelly, drummer] and Paul [Duffy, bassist] did a band called Serpent Power with Paul Molloy [now The Coral's new guitarist], and I did an album [2013's *Love Undercover*, credited to James Skelly & The Intenders] that all the lads played on, and I started up a label, Skeleton Key, and produced some bands."

Did you know for sure you'd get back together and finish the album you'd started?

"I knew we would get back together. But I didn't have a clue when. Could have been 10 years, could have been 20… But last year I played a gig with Ian Broudie, and it was the first time I'd played with Bill [Ryder-Jones, The Coral's former guitarist] in ages. And I said to him, Show me how you do that thing that sounds like sci-fi blues you used to do on our tunes… He was like, 'It's dead easy, you just pull down on the strings, instead of up.' A few weeks later I wrote Chasing The Tail, and I was, like, crooning, in a way, over this weird riff, and I thought, This could be a Coral tune. And then me and Nick [Power, Coral keysman] started writing together, and I wrote a couple more with Ian, and it went from there."

The album sees the debut of new guitarist Paul Molloy. What does he bring?

"Molloy joined midway through. It was great, because the bits he added to the already-recorded songs were, you know, 'tasteful'. He could have put his ego all over it, but everything he added was just the right thing. There's a live jam he plays on at the end of Million Eyes, and we wanted it to be like Hawkwind, as in if there's anything out of tune or if there's any madness to it, then you leave it in – it just is what it is."

The lyrics are dark. What are you dealing with here?

"The Distance Inbetween is the unknown, the void, the abyss. The idea was, it's like Ian Curtis's lyrics: apocalyptic, but domestic, know what I mean? It's almost like a nuclear bomb has gone off, but you're in the kitchen… I don't know, I can't explain it. It's like Gregory Crewdson's photography, or like Richard Yates's books – there's someone on the train, but in their mind they're in Ancient Sumeria. Err… It's hard to explain, really."

Jenn Five

Various

★★★★

George Fest:
A Night To Celebrate
The Music Of
George Harrison

BMG. CD/DL/LP

Indie-leaning tribute to The Quiet One, led by Dhani Harrison.

In what can be seen as an alternative take on 2002's Royal Albert Hall memorial gig Concert For George, on September 28, 2014 at the Fonda Theatre in LA, what looks on paper like a hotch-potch of musicians gathered to explore "deeper cuts from his career" for a concert film and this soundtrack album. Multi-artist tributes are typically patchy by nature, but *George Fest* really works. Even what might sound like terrible ideas – Conan O'Brien doing Old Brown Shoe, "Weird Al" Yankovic tackling What Is Life – are strangely successful, with the songs given the respect they deserve. Norah Jones's Something is just plain lovely and The Flaming Lips are reliably wigged-out on It's All Too Much. The star of the show, however, is Dhani Harrison himself, his voice uncannily like his father's in fine renditions of Savoy Truffle and Let It Down.

Tom Doyle

Underworld

★★★★

Barbara Barbara,
We Face a
Shining Future

CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL/LP

Venerable dance duo and Olympic heroes return with welcome change of pace.

After directing the music for the 2012 Olympic opening ceremony, one hadn't expected Underworld to splinter off into soundtracks and Brian Eno collaborations. Impressive though these projects were, the greatest result from this time apart seems to be the recharged focus brought to bear on Karl Hyde and Rick Smith's first album together in six years. *Barbara Barbara…* showcases a sense of purpose that was mostly absent from their albums of the '00s. The opening combo of I Exhale and If Rah might sound like a big club comeback attempt at first, but soon reveal themselves as introverted dance music with menacing beats and bass to bore holes, scattered with Hyde's free association poetry. A trademark contrast awaits: euphoric and melancholy pieces impress with stealthy hooks and gliding keys. It's elemental Underworld, and their most generous work in years.

Ian Crichton

Kano

★★★★

Made In The Manor

PARLOPHONE. CD/DL/LP

Grime originator moves out of his comfort zone on first offering in six years.

Charismatic Newham rhyme-slayer Kano first showed his ability to run riot over multiple styles on 2005's cutting debut *Home Sweet Home*, later parlaying his status into a leading role in TV crime drama Top Boy. His comeback shows no signs of ring-rust as he nimbly tosses tricky biscuit metaphors over Rustie's frenetic production on Hail and matches his syllable-stretching flow against Wiley and Giggs on dramatic three-way-relay 3 Wheel-ups. Yet fifth time around, Kano's 'real East End theme music' is also filtered through soul-searching, booze-sodden reflections, such as Damon Albarn hook-up Deep Blues, that address nixed expectations, frayed family ties and frustrations with fame with minimum mawkishness and maximum wit. It reaffirms Kano's position as a consummate grime all-rounder.

Andy Cowan

The 1975

★★★

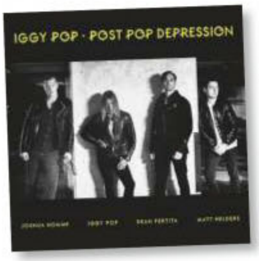
I Like It When You
Sleep, For You Are
So Beautiful Yet So
Unaware Of It

DIRTY HIT/POLYDOR. CD/DL/LP

Messy but sometimes winning second album from Manchester foursome.

The 1975's eponymous 2013 debut took them to the toppermost of the poppermost. For its follow-up, they've taken the decision to go large, from its unwieldy title down to its exhaustive – and exhausting – 17-track running order. The reasoning behind this might well be explained by the lyrics of UGH!, an only slightly ambivalent love letter to cocaine. Musically, they've landed firmly in the mid '80s, in faithfully recreating the period's proto digital productions and wristy funk guitars, not least with the distinct whiff of *Notorious*-era Duran Duran about Love Me. Ambitious but muddled, throughout they veer from the awful (the toe-curling Johnny Hates Jazz-ish She's American) to the gently compelling, as with Prince-y ballad If I Believe You and the loveIorn electro-pop of Somebody Else. Bet it all sounded great to them on the big speakers in the studio though.

Tom Doyle



Iggy Pop

★★★★

Post Pop Depression

CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL/LP

A fabulous sayonara (possibly) to rank alongside *Blackstar*.

Variable though his output's been since '77's *Lust For Life*, it's hard to imagine this could be Iggy's farewell album [see feature p70]; just weeks after Pop's old spar Bowie delivered his. Co-conceived with Josh Homme, *Post Pop Depression* is every bit as startling, both in sound, and end-of-days openness. Instead of headlong heavy rock, Homme reprises the near-baroque poise of QOTSA's *…Like Clockwork* – itself clearly informed by Berlin-era Iggy – but never resembling a lame remake, *à la* post-millennial Stooges outings (indeed, Gardenia's opening shimmers more like Bowie's Sound And Vision). Homme's procurement of a "dossier" of Pop writings was every bit as crucial, finally re-engaging him as a lyricist of uniquely goofy substance. Iggy's frequent musings on mortality ("Is anybody in there, and can I bring a friend?" – American Valhalla) are bitterly funny. Paraguay posits him lolloping off to retirement, telling everyone to fuck off. Way to go! But after such a rebirth, that can't be it, surely?

Andrew Perry

The 1975: panic at the '80s disco.

Self help group

New York alt-rock stalwarts crack the code to timeless melody on eighth album. By Keith Cameron.

NADA SURF
YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE

Nada Surf

★★★★

You Know Who You Are

CITY SLANG. CD/DL/LP

NADA SURF'S third album, 2002's *Let Go*, remains a benchmark for the New York band. Its effervescent melancholy heralded songwriter Matthew Caws' graduation from '90s alt-rock irony into a profound diarist of the human condition, and for all its successors' merits, none have emulated that record's sustained sickly-sweet buzz of regret.

Now, however, the elements have aligned again. After the astringent production of 2008's *Lucky* and 2012's over-clinical *The Stars Are Indifferent To Astronomy*, *You Know Who You Are* exudes the same Zen understatement that nourished *Let Go*. Perhaps the presence of former Guided By Voices guitarist Doug Gillard as a full-time member has refreshed the internal dynamic between Caws and long-term compadres Daniel Lorca and Ira Elliot, but a shift is evident from the beginning, with triple-decked harmony mini-suite Cold To See Clear. Amid the meld of winsome fingerpicking and powerchordage – a Caws speciality – it invokes the transcendent wonder of music heard via the airwaves: "The radio took me/The radio made me/What can I do but dream?"

There's an old theory that an album's pivotal moment is side one track three: snag listeners there and you've got them for the duration. Here's where Caws drops the shattering Friend Hospital ("So much better that we're not together"), positing Alex Chilton astride Crazy Horse on a root canal burn to the soul. The darkness amid Nada Surf is overlooked, especially as, in the wake of *Let Go*, they began soundtracking coming-of-age US TV dramas like One Tree Hill and The OC. Much of *You Know Who You Are* could do likewise, though this isn't to denigrate the deft economy of a heart-tugger like Believe You're Mine, which despite its familiar catharsis emits a subliminal tension.

Only on the mid-album freewheel of Rushing do Caws' high-register homilies slide into soap opera. Otherwise, even upful songs are shadowed by unease, like New Bird ("The other one's not singing any more") which beneath its ragged euphoria intimates familial conflict, or the horn-reveille Out Of The Dark, an exhortation from a bleak place: "I've heard that work can tamp down madness." Even the closing Victory's Yours, light relief after the edgy motorik of Gold Sounds, really is exit music: "I wish you peace/Now I'm gone."

Throughout the album's crisp 10-track sequence, this reconfigured band are clearly once again enjoying the fruits of the unfathomable confluence of life and art. Both Matthew Caws parents' are professors: listening to his bold, self-aware elegies to imbalanced lives you sense he's inherited enough of their genetic wiring to understand what makes a good song. But knowledge can only take you so far; application is the real test. And *You Know Who You Are* passes with distinction.

Serious drinking: Nada Surf (from left) Doug Gillard, Matthew Caws, Ira Elliot and Daniel Lorca await refreshments.

White Denim

★★★★

Stiff

DOWNTOWN/SONY RED. CD/DL/LP

Austin, Texas's best-kept secret deliver fine fusion of psych/soul/punk.

For a decade White Denim have been a cult concern who've deserved so much more. Weathering the amicable exit of half their line-up since 2013's *Corsicana Lemonade*, *Stiff* is not the sound of a band licking their wounds; rather, it's White Denim's boldest yet, fusing hard-edged R&B, lucid Southern choogle, lean punk-rock dynamics and a sugar-cube or two of psychedelia. Their musicianship – flamboyant but never self-indulgent, focused always on the groove – and their sticky-fingered songwriting charm throughout; Holda You (I'm Psycho) is a breathless jumble of Hall & Oates pop and ecstatic Allmans-on-uppers guitar duelling that should be a mess but is an irresistible joy. The smouldering blue-eyed balladry of Take It Easy conjures keening Southern soul, while closer Thank You essays dulcet jazz-rock with such consummate charm, you wonder if there's anything White Denim *can't* do. May it make them the stars they should already be.

Stevie Chick

Rihanna

★★★★

ANTI

VIRGIN EMI/ROC NATION. CD/DL/LP

Her first album in four years, with none of the recent hits, is contrary and compelling.

There are extraordinary things going on here – an album released for free online just a few hours after lead single Work came out, with an extra three tracks turning up the following day. Rihanna does have integrity: that studiedly slapdash, elegantly chaotic approach is echoed right through the record. It's confusing, with flaky endings and mood swings, and an utterly compelling mix of not caring at all and desperately caring. Opener Consideration (with the ace SZA) stomps and soars and starts the party. Love On The Brain is like Rihanna doing an unheard Amy Winehouse classic. Desperado (not an Eagles cover, though you wouldn't put it past her) has epic menace and Rihanna's trademark steely vulnerability. Throughout, her voice seems capable of anything, from bolshy blues and sweet-stoned whispers to bouncing dancehall and clipped cabaret crooning.

Anna Wood

Bob Mould

★★★★

Patch The Sky

MERGE. CD/DL/LP

Former Hüsker Dü linchpin's midlife hot-streak continues on solo album number 11.

BOB
MOULD
PATCH
THE
SKY

"Can I find some truth within the noise?" ponders Bob Mould amid opener Voices In My Head; a rhetorical question, for Mould's 35-year journey has been driven by this internal dialectic. Remarkably, the alt-rock pioneer still sounds inspired by both sides of the equation on *Patch The Sky*, 12 songs that divide sonically between a slamming first half full of ascendant melodies, followed by its more turbulent second side, but where the proximity of personal demons and raging guitar harmonics are constants. Pray For Rain ("We could use a storm or two every day") has to be one of the most perversely uplifting songs about depression Mould has ever written, while Black Confetti is the intense, compulsive sound of a soul plugged into the planet's molten core. Following the creative upswing of 2012's *Silver Age* and 2014's *Beauty & Ruin*, this is definitive work.

Keith Cameron

Submotion Orchestra

★★★

Colour Theory

COUNTER. CD/DL/LP

Textured jazz/dance music hybrid with pop smarts.

In the years since Submotion Orchestra's formation, the dubstep phenomenon that acted as a prime influence on the Leeds seven-piece has mutated – although the success of London Grammar and Rudimental is indicative of its pervading legacy. Submotion Orchestra's USP was the live experience, but *Colour Theory* showcases a more lavish, studio-based approach. The smoky jazz and new age flavours of previous releases still resonate, but are joined by downbeat house, future R&B and broken beat. The guest vocal contributions (in-house vocalist Ruby Wood is on maternity leave) are especially memorable, particularly Andrew Ashong's on the wispy, Zero 7-ish electro-folk of Needs and Billy Boothroyd's understated, doleful approach to the glitch ballad, More Than This. They're the standouts among songs whose provenance is club music but which glint with the lustre of finely crafted pop.

Stephen Worthy

Loretta Lynn, the woman comes around.

Eternal return

Queen of country's first since 2004's Grammy-grabbing *Van Lear Rose*, her collaboration with Jack White. By James McNair.

Loretta Lynn

★★★★

Full Circle

LEGACY. CD/DL/LP

THE CLUE is in the title. Produced by Johnny Cash's son John Carter Cash and Patsy Lynn Russell, one of Loretta's six children, *Full Circle* sees the Queen of Country, now almost 84, begin to put her house in order. "The music [here] and in the upcoming volumes," writes Cash in his sleevenotes, flagging-up the 100 or so new recordings he's been helping Lynn stockpile since 2007, "is a statement of accumulated genius by one of our remaining original masters."

Having seen what Rick Rubin and Johnny Cash achieved at the tail end of his father's life, John Carter Cash understands what's required to help a towering figure of American music execute a potent and (hopefully) slow-burning valedictory. Still, even if *Full Circle* ends with Lay Me Down, an acceptant, 'time to meet my Maker' duet with fellow octogenarian Willie Nelson, Lynn still sounds full of the life-force; more engaged and effervescent than many stars half her age.

You can hear it on the big, open-throated chorus of Wine Into Water, wherein Lynn, playing an alcoholic, requests the Lord's help as she attempts to invert one of His better-known miracles. You can hear it on Fist City, a spirited revisit of Lynn's 1968, gal-fight honky-tonker. You can hear it, too, in the studio chitchat that proceeds *Full Circle*'s new version of Whispering Sea, the waltz-time ballad that was the first song Lynn ever wrote. "I was fishin'," she says with a laugh, holding court and telling her rapt band of crack musicians of the song's provenance. "Let it rip, boys!" she adds, and away they go.

With its Elvis Costello backing vocal, Everything It Takes sounds as though it's been kicking around the Grand Ole Opry for decades, yet it's a new song by Lynn and Todd Snider. In classic country tradition, they ensure that every perfectly weighted lyrical couplet packs a punch, a gag, or both: "She's cold as ice but you still think she's hot/She's got everything it takes to take everything you've got," sings Lynn, relishing every syllable.

Overall, *Full Circle*'s tracklisting strikes a neat balance between resonant standards (Always On My Mind; Secret Love), stirring honky-tonk (Everybody Wants To Go To Heaven; Band Of Gold), and stock-taking, mountain-top folk best exemplified by Who's Gonna Miss Me? All told, we should be very glad that Loretta Lynn – the woman whose 1968 riposte to Tammy Wynette and Billy Sherrill's über-submissive Stand By Your Man was Your Squaw Is On The Warpath – is still around. Like her fellow Grand Dames of American Roots music Aretha Franklin and Mavis Staples, she remains a force to be reckoned with.

Be

★★★★

One

RIVERTONES. CD/DL/LP

Immersive drone essays celebrating the planet of the apian.

The soundtrack to artist Wolfgang Buttress's multiple award-winning UK Pavilion installation at the 2015 Milan Expo, which highlighted the imperilled future of the honeybee and the fundamental importance of pollination to the ecosystem of which humans are an increasingly deleterious part, *One* is the work of sometime-Julian Cope, Spritualized, and Soulsavers associates Kev Bales and Tony Foster, and guests. Comprising four lengthy, modal tracks, this is enveloping, drone-raga-like music, infused with field recordings of the bucolic English summertime. Thus, The Journey's fluttering wing-like strings (courtesy of Icelandic quartet Amiina) gradually cede to purring, transfixing harmoniums, while Uplift welcomes sonorous cellos and bee-colony referencing vocals from Camille Buttress, before the buzzing, swarm-like strings return, heralding The Hive's more ominous drone and plangent guitars – fleetingly redolent of Fripp & Eno's *No Pussyfooting*. Superior waggle dance music it is, then.

David Sheppard

Ray LaMontagne

★★★★

Ouroboros

COLUMBIA. CD/DL/LP

Singer-songwriter peers into eternity on cosmic fifth album.

"You're never going to hear this song on the radio," sings Ray LaMontagne on the closing track of *Ouroboros*, "but wouldn't it make a lovely photograph?" The title refers to the ancient infinity symbol of a snake swallowing its own tail, and with these songs, LaMontagne draws his own dreamy circles in the sand. Encouraged by the hazy presence of co-producer Jim James, few traces remain of his previous wood-chopping ruggedness, the singer holing up with a saucerful of secrets for Homecoming, or raising inertia to an art-form on Another Day's time-lapse blur. Wouldn't It Make A Lovely Photograph is even far-out enough to recall Hurdy Gurdy Man. Hey No Pressure raises the record's pulse to dangerous levels, but the drowsing, starry-eyed mood is best served by the instructions issued on In My Own Way: "Lock the door/Draw the shade."

Victoria Segal

Brian Fallon

★★★★

Painkillers

ISLAND. CD/DL/LP

The Gaslight Anthem's frontman flees the nest.

Before pulling the plug on The Gaslight Anthem in 2015, vocalist/guitarist Brian Fallon had stockpiled songs he thought unsuitable for the band. To the casual listener, there's little on his debut solo album that doesn't fulfil their brief of preachy heartland rock. The first single, A Wonderful Life, arrives on a wave of chugging guitars, Motown-soundalike vocal whoops and a brazen E Street Band-style hook. So far, so Bruce. But as *Painkillers* unfolds, with Steve McQueen and Honey Magnolia's ghostly guitar refrains, it's clear this is a subtler and superior take on the old band's pumped-up Springsteen-lite. Open All Night and the car-and-girls sing-along Long Drives sound overly familiar, but elsewhere Fallon serves up an unashamed pop song on Among Other Foolish Things. The Gaslight Anthem's previous album, 2014's *Get Hurt*, lacked bite. *Painkillers* suggests their frontman really was holding his best songs back.

Mark Blake

Damien Jurado

★★★★

Visions Of Us On The Land

SECRETLY CANADIAN. CD/DL/LP

Seattle songsmith delivers an intriguing "sonic map with no set direction".

At heart, a psych-tinged, urban folk singer, steeped in Gordon Lightfoot, Randy Newman and The West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band, Damien Jurado has been delivering singular, curiously melodic albums for almost two decades now, with, latterly, a laudable disposition toward studio experiment. Effectively the final part of a trilogy with producer Richard Swift, *Visions Of Us On The Land* carries on where 2012's *Maraqopa* and 2014's *Brothers And Sisters Of The Son* left off, its 17 yearning, numinous essays, with lyrics that are part road trip, part inward odyssey, inhabiting a liminal, sepia-tinted sound world – folk, psych and country song-shapes enshrined in sonic muslin. Thus, opener November 20 is a pulsing yet gauzy entrée, enfolded in mellotron strings, while Prisms and the title track are starker dissertations for guitar, voice and ineffably haunting atmosphere, and AM AM a dustily reverberant baroque-pop gem, redolent of prime Fleet Foxes.

David Sheppard

Balsamo
Deighton
unfolding

Balsamo Deighton

★★★

Unfolding

EARMUSIC. CD/DL/LP

Welsh Americana duo's debut goes all out for flash, not trousers.

Once of "Swansea's answer to the Eagles" The Storys, Steve Balsamo and Rosalie Deighton's debut as a duo picks up more or less where the band left off when they split five years ago. Where The Storys chased Don Henley and co as they tried to loosen their load, Balsamo Deighton stray closer to Fleetwood Mac, with themselves in the Buckingham-Nicks starring roles. Production slick enough to turn Lindsey Buckingham's cheeks red picks out some stylish playing and harmonies so close there's barely a Rizla between their voices, but eventually the middle of the road becomes wearying. If only there was some grit to grab hold of under the smooth surface, Balsamo Deighton could be onto a winner here.

Andy Fyfe

Willie Nelson

★★★

Summertime: Willie Nelson Sings Gershwin

LEGACY. CD/DL

By George, I think he's got it!

SUMMERTIME
WILLIE NELSON

Last year, Willie Nelson became the first country music artist to be awarded the Gershwin Prize for Popular Song for his songwriting. Here he celebrates the honour by recording a number of the greatest songs composed by George Gershwin. Willie, of course, is no Sinatra, nor even a Tony Bennett. But he has an honesty, knows how to caress a good song, and phrases knowingly. Supported here by a small, jazz-inclined group that includes Matt Rollins (keyboards), Dean Parks (guitar) and Paul Franklin (steel guitar), Willie delivers classics like But Not For Me and They Can't Take That Away From Me in a warm and wistful manner, turning to Cyndi Lauper for vocal support on Let's Call The Whole Thing Off and, even better, linking with Sheryl Crow for a memorable duet on Embraceable You. S'wonderful!

Fred Dellar

GLENN JONES
fleeting

Glenn Jones

★★★★

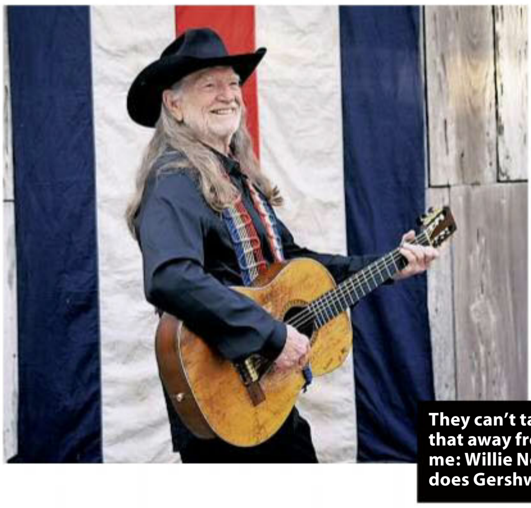
Fleeting

THRILL JOCKEY. CD/DL/LP

Sixth album by leading American Primitive guitarist.

Thoroughly immersed in the innovations of John Fahey and Robbie Basho – a presence here in Portrait Of Basho As A Young Dragon – Glenn Jones nevertheless has his own style and mood: more meditative, less angst-ridden than those two pioneers, seeking out the spaces rather than hurtling headlong. These 10 acoustic pieces hold a certain stillness within the variety of tempos, instruments and inspirations. Mixing guitar and banjo, *Fleeting* is an overtly pastoral record, with sound effects saturating Spokane River Falls and final track June Too Soon, October All Over. The former references the small town where Jones grew up, while In Durance Vile was written to accompany three poems by the painter Wassily Kandinsky. Perhaps the album's centre is the slow, nakedly emotional Mother's Day, with its gorgeous melody.

Jon Savage



David McClister

They can't take that away from me: Willie Nelson does Gershwin.

Treetop Flyers

★★★★

Palomino

LOOSE. CD/DL/LP

North Londoners breathe new ideas into great British Americana.

No sooner were the favourable reviews in for Treetop Flyers' 2013 debut *The Mountain Moves* than life started to go awry for the north London five-piece. Deaths, defections and divorce began to take a toll on their breezy West Coast Americana. But hey, what doesn't kill you, right? In this case that aphorism is true, and the band return stronger, sleeker. Any number of acts can produce CSN wind-in-the-hair harmonies, but who would see a way to marry them to disco synths (You, Darling You) or torchy soul (as on the ballad Lady Luck), while six-and-a-half-minute single Dance Through The Night sounds something like Deep Purple's Jon Lord jamming with Santana. Rather than it being a mish-mash of wrong, Treetop Flyers have not exactly reinvented the wheel but certainly given the tyres a good kicking and come up with all kinds of right.

Andy Fyfe

Gabriel Kahane

★★★

The Ambassador

STORYSOUND. CD/DL/LP

The Sufjan Stevens/Beck collaborator's Los Angeles miscellany.

The city of Los Angeles has been abundantly served by musical tributes, but this concept album from a 34-year-old Brooklyn singer-songwriter with a Conservatory background is quite probably the prettiest to date. After all, Los Angeles is a million things, but it ain't pretty. Kahane redefines the place via a 10-song cycle, each component named after a different street address and offering melancholy meditation on the unheralded culture-vulture lives conducted within – not unlike Robert Altman's Short Cuts, as narrated by a Green Gartside soundalike, or a transatlantic take on Squeeze's recent *Cradle To The Grave*. The self-accompanying piano-singer writes such beautiful, twisty-turny narrative songs, and orchestrates them so delicately, it's hardly surprising he spurns James Ellroy-esque grit and gore – although, on the darker Villains, one couple amusingly consider moving "into the house where they shot Pulp Fiction – we could put the nursery where Uma OD'd".

Andrew Perry

AMERICANA

BY SYLVIE SIMMONS

NOS DA COMRADE PETER BRUNTNELL

Peter Bruntnell

★★★★

Nos Da Comrade

DOMESTICO. CD/DL

First album of new originals in what feels like forever from consistent man of the West.

BORN IN Wales, based in Devon, Peter Bruntnell is no stranger to this column nor to an Americana album of the month accolade. Twenty years into his recording career, the beauty and resonance of his songs has rarely faltered, winning him fans such as Jay Farrar and Kurt Wagner of (whatever happened to?) Lambchop. But not big record contracts, judging by this home-made, self-produced, self-released album, the follow-up to 2013's *Retrospective* which his former label, Loose, released. *Nos Da Comrade* – Welsh for Goodnight Comrade – has 11 songs on typically eclectic topics: Donald Trump (Mr Sunshine, engaging, almost early Elvis Costello new wave); Yuri Gagarin; the death of a loved-one (slow, moving, Eels-esque Dance Of The Dead). Most feature a fine band, though one of the loveliest tracks (End Of The World) is just voice and guitar.

ALSO RELEASED

The Pines

★★★★

Above The Prairie

RED HOUSE. CD/DL

The Iowa-based Pines really are musical landscape artists, their subject the Midwestern prairies. The colours are mostly dark but with flashes of light (lovely Come What Is), and the tempos mostly slow and contemplative. There In Spirit; Hanging From The Earth; and Sleepy Hollow, whose harmonies floor you, are particularly haunting. Bar the grating closer, it's their most beautiful yet.

Locust Honey String Band

★★★

Never Let Me Cross Your Mind

LOCUSTHONEY.COM. CD/DL

There's no shortage of young, proficient, indie bluegrass bands covering traditionals, old country numbers plus a few new songs of their own. But one thing, besides the tight playing, that makes this stand out is that two of the three vocalists are women – great on hymn-like Carter Family cover Righten That Wrong, Kitty Wells' Whose Shoulder and murder ballad (a Nick Cave favourite) Henry Lee.

Various

★★★

God Don't Never Change: The Songs of Blind Willie Johnson

ALLIGATOR. CD/DL/LP

Blues singer and slide guitarist Johnson recorded 30 songs between 1927 and 1930, and 11 are covered here by a curious, though often great, selection of artists. Tom Waits gets two songs – a scary preacher with a choir on John The Revelator – as does Lucinda Williams (wonderful on God Don't Never Change). Other highlights: Maria McKee and (the only black participants, oddly) The Blind Boys Of Alabama.

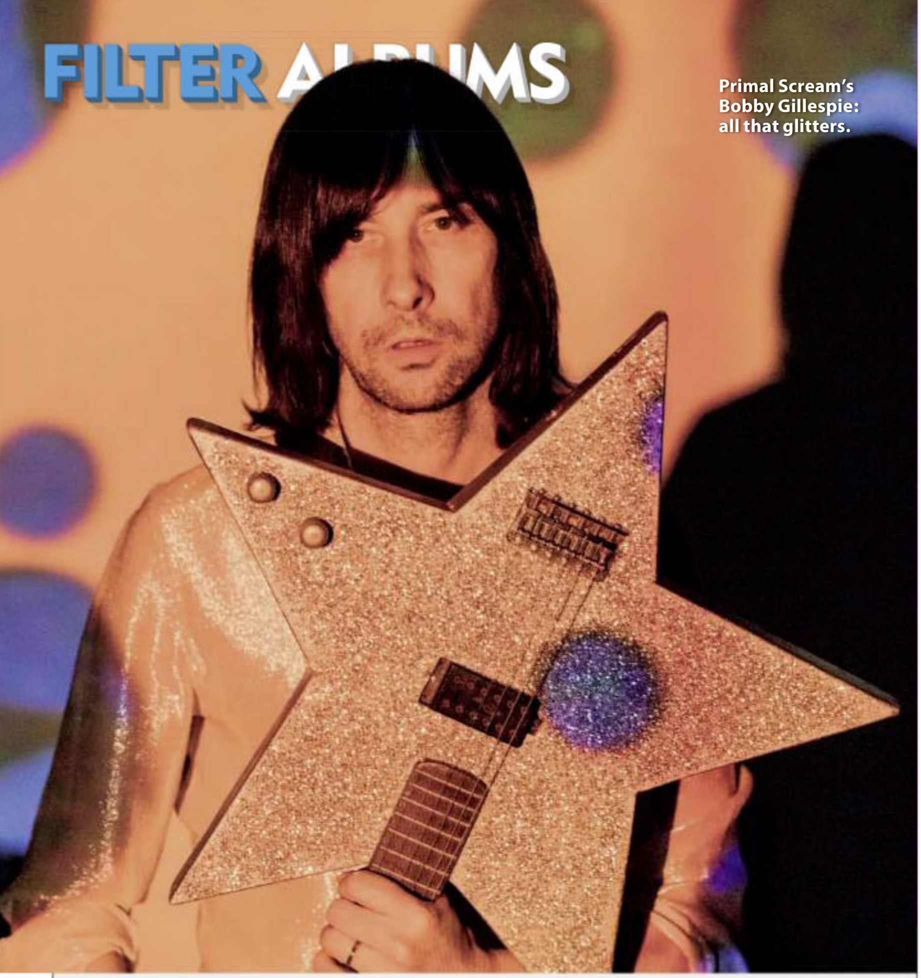
Malcolm Holcombe

★★★★

Another Black Hole

PROPER. CD/DL

Should anyone be daft enough to think last year's *RCA Sessions* retrospective meant the gruff-voiced folkie was resting on his laurels, here are 10 new songs, recorded in Nashville. Some are sparser and bluesier, others with a fine, swampy groove (Tony Joe White guests). Highlights: Papermill Man; Someone Missing: Don't Play Around. *SS*



Primal Scream's Bobby Gillespie: all that glitters.

Beyond the stars

Eleven albums in, veteran rabble-rousers get in touch with their feelings. By Victoria Segal.

Primal Scream

★★★

Chaosmosis

FIRST INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL/LP

BOBBY GILLESPIE might look like a man who could be flattened by a dandelion clock, but when it comes to attitude, Primal Scream have always been heavyweights. Since *Screamadelica*, they have used rock'n'roll like a defence system, piling up the political graffiti, hedonistic slogans and retro off-cuts around them like barricades, daring those who didn't take them seriously to enter their territory and say that to their faces.

Following 2013's solid *More Light*, however, *Chaosmosis* sounds like the work of a band with a few new chinks in their armour – not a sign of debility, in this case, but an important developmental step. It's not obviously clear from the opening Trippin' On Your Love, a baggy burble with Summer-of-Love strings and Haim on backing vocals, that remembers Loaded as if it was yesterday (blurry round the edges, key moments missing). Its blithe swagger is, however, destabilised by the line "Stare into the void too long/It stares back into you." If some of Primal Scream's recent output – 2006's *Riot City Blues*, for example – could feel like a bolshy, protests-too-much midlife-crisis, this is the first sign of surprising introspection, the mark of a band realising they don't need to be in snarling denial of their vulnerabilities.

Rather than any Gillespie state of the nation addresses, subtle as a mohawk on a Churchill statue, *Chaosmosis* addresses churning inner turmoil, a touch of soul that, unusually, they don't have to overstate. Golden Rope's Stooges stomp is transformed by the closing insistence that "I know that there is something wrong with me." The equally inward-looking I Can Change is carried on a flimsy keyboard setting that sounds like it belongs in an adult education dance class, and is therefore more genuinely unhinged than any number of out-of-it handclaps and "yeah"s; the same aura of disturbed, paper-thin reality is also apparent on the fragile folk exhalation of Private Wars.

They haven't completely shunned the electro-pop aggro: 100% Or Nothing, again with Haim, is as good as its ferocious title, while Where The Light Gets In, featuring Sky Ferreira, fills any philosophical emptiness with a parade-balloon-sized chorus of "peace begins within". Yet *Chaosmosis* is not euphoric: there's a real chill in the air of (Feeling Like A) Demon Again, The Cure's A Forest playing in an amusement arcade, and its goth bleeping is pushed even further by When The Blackout Meets The Fallout's industrial static. On the stark electronic relationship breakdown of Carnival Of Fools, Gillespie sings: "I didn't know what to say/I didn't know who to be." By shedding some of their rock'n'roll excess, though, it feels as if Primal Scream finally have some idea of what they want to be when they grow up.

CHAOSMOSIS

The KVB

★★★★

Of Desire

INVADA. CD/DL/LP

Berlin-based duo reach indie critical mass on fifth album, mastered by Sonic Boom.

Current single In Deep fanfares the arrival of The KVB's fifth album and second for Geoff Barrow's Bristol-based label. Capturing the duo's perfect balance of fan with technician, it plumbs indie music's past, inhabiting the same sonic atmospheres as the JAMC, MBV and Joy Division, but is executed with expert ability. "Destiny, it's calling, it's sinking its claws in deep," Nicholas Wood sings over a powerful surge of clanging guitars and swirling synths; the delivery and effect is utterly thrilling. Elsewhere, the euphoric White Walls, comprising five and a half minutes of repetitive bass and beat, has Wood and Kat Day studying at the Düsseldorf School. The disorientating Lower Depth, meanwhile, is a sinister crawl, providing the nocturnal ebb to the rest of the album's elated flow.

Lois Wilson

Kiran Leonard

★★★

Grapefruit

MOSHI MOSHI. CD/DL/LP

Precocious Mancunian's second labyrinthine epic.

Oldham boy Leonard's eyes are not on the commercial prize but on the pay-off from pairing complex composition to widescreen emotion. At just 17, he made debut album *Bowler Hat Soup* a double; alone, he played 22 instruments, and cited Zappa, Sufjan, Deerhoof, Albert Ayler, Penderecki and Godspeed You! Black Emperor among his influences. *Grapefruit*'s lead single is the 16-minute Pink Fruit; with vocal and guitar scanning from whisper to wail, Leonard most resembles Jeff Buckley, if the latter had built on the flailing sorcery of his 15-minute cover of Alex Chilton's Kangaroo rather than the controlled *Grace*. Leonard's lyrics are as oblique as his song titles (Caiaphas In Fetters; Öndör Gongor) suggest, leaving the music to dominate, equal parts math rock, jazz and prog, the equivalent of a ride through an electrical storm, in which snatches of conventional melody appear and disappear at will. Insanely ambitious, or just insane; you decide.

Martin Aston

The Feeling

★★★★

The Feeling

LITTLE WORLD. CD/DL/LP

Serial melody makers follow-up 2013's *Boy Cried Wolf*.

Though it's perhaps wise to be wary of eponymously-titled albums that aren't debuts, *The Feeling* is thus-named for good reason. Recorded apace pretty much live in the studio, it is a faithful document of how Dan Gillespie Sells and co actually sound. Happily, it also packs real zeal, with all the freshness that's sometimes sacrificed on the altar of overdubbing/endless reappraisal emerging intact. Beyond its mercifully brief pub rock intro, Young Things is arch, quicksilver pop, GS mocking/celebrating the antics of hip stripling hedonists. Elsewhere, Repeat To Fade plants its flag somewhere between The Doors and mid-period Muse, while Real Deal builds to a magnificently raucous Afro-pop shuffle with shades of Vampire Weekend, Duran Duran and Radiohead. The arbiters of cool probably won't look upon The Feeling any more kindly, but this is another tranche of top tunes.

James McNair

James

★★★

Girl At The End Of The World

BMG. CD/DL/LP

Manc perennials reach a new plateau of sleek modernism.

Twenty-eight years in the field (not counting the six between 2001 split and 2007 reunion), in time-honoured fashion James claim their 14th album is their best yet, and the most stressful to make. It's their most electronically melded, more so than the Eno-assisted early '90s era, with Eno again involved, as consultant, while producer Max Dingel taps more of his work with Killers and White Lies than on James' preceding album, *La Petite Mort*. They've wisely dialled back on that album's Madchester-aping too, preferring spiralling patient build-ups to four-on-the-floor throbs, such as Attention and Surfer's Song, while Dear John and Feet Of Clay provide breathing space. If there is an anthem, Nothing But Love does the trick. *Girl At The End Of The World* lacks the hooky brilliance to be James's best, but it's a Top 3 contender.

Martin Aston

Sam Christmas

Telegram

★★★

Operator

GRAMGRAM. CD/DL/LP

Debut album from London-based, Welsh-voiced art-rock combo.

No one can say that Telegram's angular mainman Matt Saunders rushed into things. After art school, he moved to London from his native Caerphilly well over a decade ago and his impulse to gain nourishment as a songwriter led him to a glacial solo career, before deciding to form a band after a transformational trek across North America that ended in ritual peyote-taking with Navajo natives. Now, Saunders finally bring his musical vision to fruition: and, with Telegram's Krautrock, psychedelic Pink Floyd and glam rock influences, it packs a remarkable punch. Syd-esque couplets, such as Aeons' "He likes to put things right/He's so tall, he's quite a fright", delivered in Saunders' strong Welsh brogue inescapably draw comparison to Super Furry Animals; but the savage, motorik attack of Follow and the dancing melodies of Taffy Come Home suggests an alluring and original talent.

Pat Gilbert

Heron Oblivion

★★★★

Heron Oblivion

SUB POP. CD/DL/LP

Modernist psych-folk nugget from Comets On Fire/Espers hook-up.

These San Franciscans are that rarest of beasts: a supergroup that delivers more than the sum of its parts. Drummer/vocalist Meg Baird formerly fronted Philadelphian psych-folkers Espers, while Ethan Miller and Noel Von Harmonson fried minds with Comets On Fire, and Charlie Saufley co-founded Assemble Head In Sunburst Sound. Their debut album triumphs, thanks to how well those constituent parts complement each other; on Oriar, the pristine chill of Baird's vocals channels the eloquent spook of early Fairport, while fiery post-Hendrix pyrotechnics lend the song an irresistible drama, an urgent, frazzled electricity. The epic Rama echoes Hurricane-era Crazy Horse, Baird's aching croon borne aloft by squalling guitars. Heron Oblivion's blend of tender melodies and lysergic moods works so well you wonder why these kindred spirits waited so long to collaborate; let's hope it's no one-off.

Stevie Chick

James Holden & Camilo Tirado/ Luke Abbott

★★★

Outdoor Museum Of Fractals/555hz

BORDER COMMUNITY. CD/DL/LP

Electronic experimentalists pay elegant homage to Terry Riley.

Since 2003, James Holden's Border Community has become a beacon of British electronic music; a label populated by craftspeople and risk takers. This joint album, shared between its label head and his acolyte Luke Abbott, consists of two tracks – one apiece – inspired by that doyen of electronic composition, Terry Riley. Both use arpeggio and drone to hypnotic, devastating effect. For Outdoor Museum Of Fractals, Holden is joined by tabla player Camilo Tirado, a cohort of Brit-folk archivist and singer Sam Lee. Over 46 minutes, the melodies from Holden's hand-built modular synth and Tirado's metronomic rhythms eddy and swirl, feinting reminiscent of the proto-acid of Charanjit Singh's disco ragas. Abbott's half-hour 555hz is more reflective, a spaced-out mix of gong drone and fluttering, synthesized distortion; like its sibling best devoured in one sitting. Riley, you suspect, would be enthralled.

Stephen Worthy

Heron Oblivion: rare beasts stirring in the undergrowth.

Motorpsycho

★★★★

Here Be Monsters

RUNE GRAMMOFON. CD/DL/LP

Post-25th anniversary psychedelic majesty from Norway's venerable sonic voyagers.

A 17-minute psychedelic epic might eclipse the preceding half-or-so hour of a 46-minute, seven-track album. Yet, in their 26th year, Norwegian psychonauts Motorpsycho seamlessly stitch Big Black Dog into the whole. *Here Be Monsters* is a suite, a single entity and an album as such. As with its predecessor *En Konsert For Folk Flest*, the music originally accompanied an event. This studio reconfiguration of compositions for the Norwegian Technical Museum's centennial draws from the same well as 2013's lovely *Still Life With Eggplant* with keyboard player Thomas Henriksen the only guest musician supplementing the core trio. Two short piano instrumentals punctuate the journey and the tone is set with a sensitive yet full-bodied version of the HP Lovecraft/ Terry Callier reflection Spin, Spin, Spin. Imbued with harmonies, melody and some hard-edged dynamics that draw on Led Zeppelin, this is what the pastoral Pink Floyd of 1971 might have done next.

Kieron Tyler

Poliça

★★★

United Crushers

MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES. CD/DL/LP

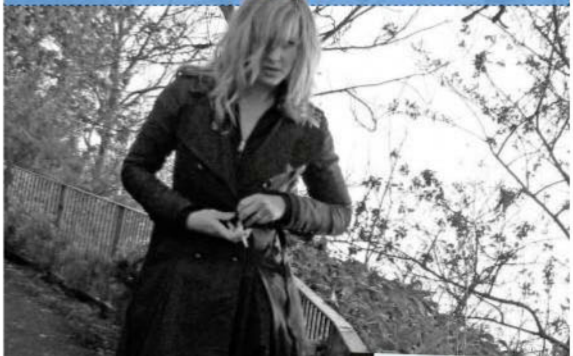
Third album from the Minneapolis gang, produced by Ryan Olson.

There are glimpses of mighty synth goodness on this album – lurching awesome swooshes on Top Coat; a clean, hard electronic rage on lead single Lime Habit; a touch of beefy rave urgency on Baby Sucks. The overriding feeling, though, is that you want to give them a good shake, maybe get them a bit drunk, try to liven them up. Spooky opener Summer Please has a not unpromising Caribou-goes-trip-hop start (it sounds enjoyably like Vic Reeves' in-a-club-style with added vocoder); there's some rousing brass and a bit of disco bass-guitar in Baby Sucks (where you feel they might almost achieve lift-off); there's stronger songwriting and a sense of electronics and lyrics coming together in Kind, Lately and Fish. But, there is just too much insipid emoting to be had in Channy Leaneagh's vocals and not enough energy or ideas in the music or the production.

Anna Wood

UNDERGROUND

BY ANDREW MALE



Heather Leigh

★★★★

I Abused Animal

IDEOLOGIC ORGAN. DL/LP

First proper solo LP from the ex-Charalambides/Scorces pedal steel player, vocalist and improviser.

IT BEGINS with a lament, or a hymn, Leigh's bestraught and tremulous a cappella, hovering over a multitracked chorus of female voices, recounting a nightmare scene from her teenage past, putting animals to death in a Texas veterinary clinic. Wintry, ethereal and strangely bewitching, it feels both ancient and modern, rooted in the raw Appalachian landscape of Leigh's childhood and the contemporary language of confessional memoir. With each successive track, Leigh's words become more visionary, dreamlike, raised high by exploratory pedal steel playing which moves from oscillating warmth to ecstatic noise. Recorded in Joe Gubay's studio on the Surrey Downs, *I Abused Animal* occasionally fits within ancient English folk song forms, Leigh's voice summoning memories of Shirley Collins and Anne Briggs, but always with perspectives distorted, forms mutated, an altered state of consciousness that, like all the best psychedelic trips, ultimately escapes definition.

ALSO RELEASED

Richard Youngs

★★★★

Inside The Future

GLASS REDUX. CD/DL

One of the first releases on David Barker's relaunched Glass label, this is Youngs at his absolute best; 10 short perpetual canons, with the singer's multitracked Northern monodies sailing over acoustic classical guitar, songs as mournful hypnotic snares cataloguing vexing modern travails and profound banalities in an ever changing world.

Raphael Roginski

★★★★

Plays John Coltrane And Langston Hughes

POPULISTA. CD/DL

Polish guitarist Raphael Roginski strips away the winding melodic complexities of eight Coltrane originals, over-amped fret and metal strings highlighting the spare, folk and blues skeletons at their heart, and expertly complemented by two intense, meandering interpretations of Langston Hughes's poetry, by Roginski and Polish R&B vocalist Natalia Przybysz.

Księżyc

★★★★

Rabbit Eclipse

PENULTIMATE PRESS. CD/LP

Following the 2013 reissue of their self-titled 1996 debut, the Polish improv six-piece return with a gorgeous new album. Recorded in Warsaw's Królikarnia Palace, *Rabbit Eclipse* sketches impressionistic post-Komeda jazz patterns of violin, clarinet and hurdy-gurdy around a ghost trio of female folk voices, transforming the present day into your very own abstract Eastern Bloc children's cartoon.

Brian Harnetty

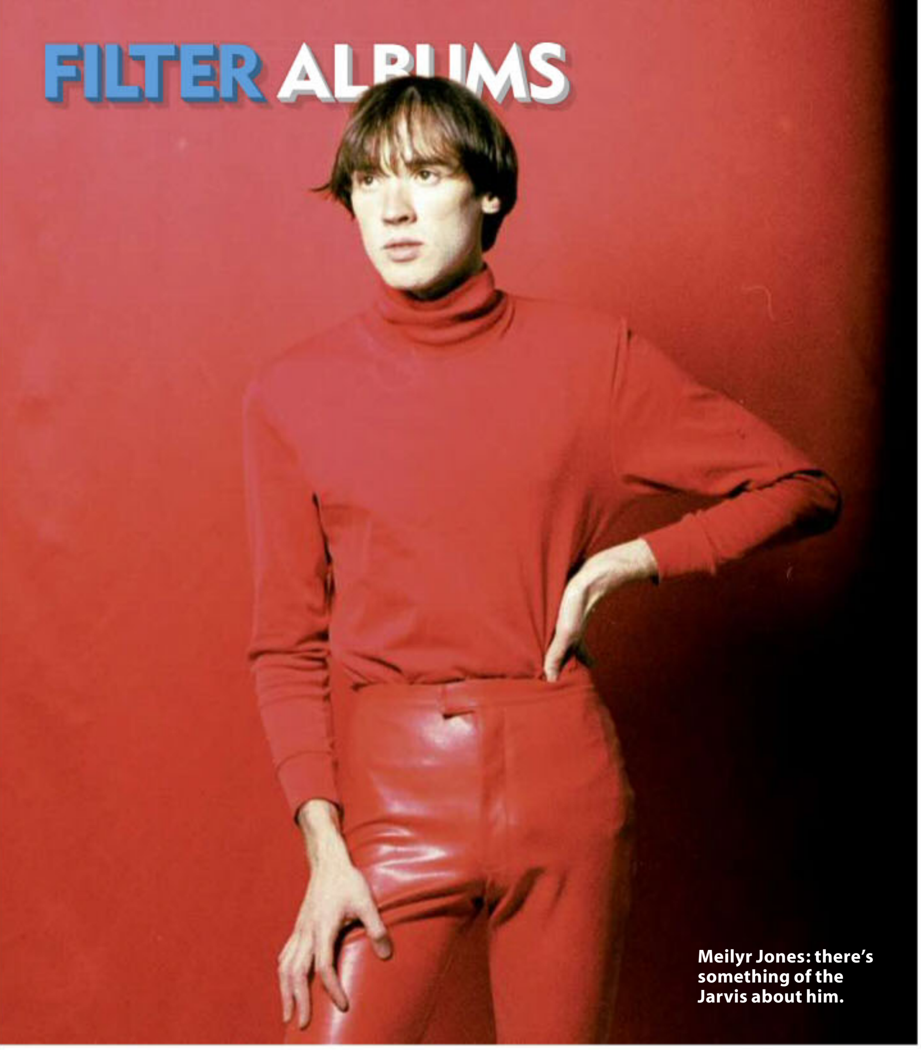
★★★★

Rawhead And Bloodybones

DUST TO DIGITAL. CD/DL

For nearly 10 years Ohio sound artist Brian Harnetty has been immersed in Kentucky's Berea College's Appalachian Sound Archives, composing new arrangements for found songs and voices. Here he rescores eight gruesome children's tales of witches, bears and serial killers into a kind of spectral music box jazz-for-voices, imbued with a deep, eerie poignancy. *AM*

Alissa Anderson



Meilyr Jones: there's something of the Jarvis about him.

Christine And The Queens

★★★★

Chaleur Humaine

BECAUSE MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

English-language debut by "French Artist of 2015", it was five times platinum at home.

In 2010, Nantes-born Héloïse Letissier moved to London, ostensibly to study, but got diverted by Soho nightlife; drag-queen-fraternising included – hence her alter ego, though Christine's identity remains a mystery. Likewise, her simmering, gaunt approach to R&B, especially as she's named the outlandish soprano deity that was Klaus Nomi (Letissier calls herself similarly "pansexual") as a key influence, while lyrically, "it's all about being loud and fierce," on behalf of shamed victims of transphobia. Beside Perfume Genius' presence on the suitably fragile Jonathan, the album's LGBTQ identity is clearest on the opener, iT ("she wants to be a man… she wants to be born again"), and on rhythmical groover Half Ladies (imagine a lo-fi, pale Madonna). But there is no manifesto pushed here, only an exploration of identity, just as Letissier searches for her place in this decade's pantheon of fabulous poly-musical femmes.

Martin Aston

CHRISTINE AND THE QUEENS / CHALEUR HUMAINE

Rosie Lowe

★★★★

Control

WOLF TONE/POLYDOR. CD/DL/LP

Smart, spectral R&B-flavoured debut album from Devonshire chanteuse.

A graduate of London's Goldsmiths College, Rosie Lowe is a savvy, 25-year-old singer-songwriter with a wonderfully clipped yet pliable voice, a predilection for wonky production tropes and a rare facility for curiously catchy choruses. Her 2013 Right Thing EP drew favourable comparisons with the likes of Solange Knowles and James Blake, and while such touchstones remain, *Control*, as the title suggests, is a much more singular statement – the sound of a butterfly artist emerging from the chrysalis of her influences. Lowe's shard-like sonic world is conjured from vintage synths and multilayered, super-processed vocals, to which tone-setting opener Run, Run, Run adds *faux*-gospel chorales, broken beats and an inexorable titular chorus. Elsewhere, the sparky, Erykah Badu-like I'll Be Gone and balladic, jazz-flavoured feminist polemic Woman evince Lowe's range, although earworm tunes and headphone-pleasing production foibles abound. Smart, modern R&B with a hinterland it is, then.

David Sheppard

ROKIA TRAORÉ NÉ SO

Rokia Traoré

★★★★

Né So

NONESUCH. CD/DL

Multi-award-winning, well-travelled Malian singer's sixth solo album.

The daughter of a peripatetic diplomat, Traoré is truly a world musician, her experimental approach, and political consciousness, based on the cross-pollination of cultures. Like 2013's *Beautiful Africa*, this latest dispatch was largely recorded in Bristol by John Parish, with cameos from the likes of John Paul Jones and Devendra Banhart, alongside Malian ngoni player Mamah Diabaté, Congolese guitarist Rodriguez Vangama, Ivorian bassist Matthieu N'guessan and many more. Despite the extended global cast, *Né So* (meaning 'chez moi' in Bambara) is a thing of delicacy, it's silky, immersive grooves and intertwined guitars weaving a subtly seductive canvas against which Traoré's smoky vocals, often couched in close harmonies, waft. Thus, Amour is a shimmering, alluring smooch, while Ilé's measured desert funk comes adorned with glinting West African guitars, and only a stark reading of Abel Meeropol's Strange Fruit breaks the exotically crepuscular spell.

David Sheppard

Richmond Fontaine

★★★

You Can't Go Back If There's Nothing To Go Back To

EL CORTEZ. CD/DL/LP

Stories steeped in regret from the Portland, Oregon alt-country outfit.

RICHMOND FONTAINE

Thwarted dreams. Life not panning out the way you'd hoped. Damaged souls taking bitter stock of what they've become. It's all here in this raw, reflective clutch, with the taste of mid-life crisis on its tongue. Everything's told in writer Willy Vlautin's off-hand vocal draped against plaintive pedal steel and tender piano. In dusty, mall-ridden US towns, Springsteen-like narrators long for salvation, but it's a blue-collar, modern cowboy world of unnecessary deaths, meaningless jobs, alcoholism, self-blame. You go back to where you grew up; no one remembers you. The woman sleeping next to you you barely know. "Went to a strip bar/But the girls were so young/And who am I? Some middle-aged man…" So dark it should be funny. Fortunately – and this, it seems, is the band's sign-off – just deft enough to move you to tears.

Glyn Brown

Jazz At The Movies

★★★★

Kiss Kiss Bang Bang

DOWNHOME. CD

Riffin' at the Rialto and keeping Hitchcock hip.

JAZZ AT THE MOVIES
kiss kiss bang bang

The quartet headed by John Wilson Orchestra reedsman Mark Crooks and pianist-writer Chris Ingham interpret movie scores in finger-clicking good fashion, and the themes they've chosen are largely unhackneyed. Songs like Frank DeVol's I'd Rather Have The Blues and Dave Grusin's It Might Be You allow vocalist Joanna Eden to demonstrate her evocative way with quality material, while the John Barry-Leslie Bricusse title track shows how deep JATM dig for little-known gems (the theme was meant for Thunderball but never used). The Man Who Got Away and Pure Imagination – here in 5/4 time – are among the better-known tracks but the obvious crowd-pleaser at live gigs has to be a version of Bacharach's South American Getaway delivered in all its original Swingles-styled glory.

Fred Dellar

Meilyr Jones

★★★★

2013

MOSHI MOSHI. CD/DL/LP

Aberystwyth tuba prodigy's Renaissance-tinged marvel.

There's something of Jarvis to Meilyr: gangly, erudite, funny, pushing 30 without having found his true calling. 2013 was the year the Royal Academy of Music student – who'd already bailed to front psych-pop band Race Horses – absconded again, for Rome and an extended immersion in art that's fired this solo debut. There are traces of similarly fruity Welsh peers Cate Le Bon and Euros Childs, but Jones has a broader palette: 30-piece orchestra, accordion, choir, field recordings et al, though everything feels tactile rather than crowded. Some signifiers: How To Recognise A Work Of Art is a bonier version of The Teardrop Explodes' trumpety beat pop; Don Juan is Welsh Motown with a harpsichord; Featured Artist is a wry spoof on the practice of resuscitating ageing stars. He's got to make it first, but this is Meilyr's time.

Martin Aston

Raleigh Ritchie

★★★

You're A Man Now, Boy

SONY. CD/DL/LP

From Game Of Thrones to soundtracking a doomed generation.

The characters that populate Ritchie's songs tiptoe on a high-wire between defying authority and self-sabotaging. Pill-popping binge drinkers and determined losers, the emotional dial is set between two extremes: pleasing vulnerability and pig-headed confidence. It's like the PG version of the slick, dead-eyed pervs who haunt The Weeknd's most hypnotic songs. But if the lyrics here read like WKD-splattered testimonies of Generation Food Bank, there's a sense of losing his nerve when it comes to the music. Front-loaded with tunes that splice doomy verses and reality-show-sanctioned choruses, Ritchie's debut only loosens up in the second half. The Greatest, A Moor, Young And Stupid and Cowards float by with an air of effortlessness and sense of purpose. Lyrically contentious and musically conservative, the album bubbles with promise, a first draft of something more left-

Colin Harper

★★★

Sunset Cavaliers

MARKET SQUARE. CD/DL

Immaculately crafted Celtic-jazz fare for the late evening.

Musicologist Harper has fashioned a multilayered array of sounds here, lacing folk-rock, traditional Irish music and swamp-organ with an enterprising line in jazz to create something that is, at once, both thought provoking yet relaxing. Aided by a stellar line-up of musicians featuring members of the Mahavishnu Orchestra plus Chris Spedding, Wishbone Ash stalwart Andy Powell and the late Bert Jansch, this essentially instrumental album boasts its share of memorable moments including a title track that spotlights Linley Hamilton's gorgeous flugelhorn playing, and an attractive Blues For The Mahavishnu. Not that the vocal contributions lack merit. The underrated Duffy Power (to whose memory the album is dedicated) does right by Nine Lives Gone, Alison O'Donnell, once of Mellow Candle, provides Aztec Energy and the Chicago-raised Sarah McQuaid closes the album with Three Syllable Time, delivered in confiding fashion.

Fred Dellar

Sarah Neufeld

★★★

The Ridge

KARTEL. CD/DL/LP

Rhythmically-enhanced second album from Arcade Fire bow-wielder.

Sarah Neufeld's solo 2013 debut, *Hero Brother*, was an exercise in starkly engaging violin minimalism, passingly indebted to Steve Reich and Henry Flynt, which, alongside her work in Bell Orchestre, and with saxophonist Colin Stetson, suggests a calling located somewhere to the left of the day-job ensemble. *The Ridge*, however, finds the Montrealer's signature esoteric bow-work allied to song structures that err, at least vaguely, toward the orthodox. Thus, the opening (title) track fuses Philip Glass-like cyclical patterns with cooing, wordless vocals and AF drummer Jeremy Gara's progressively brasher rhythms, while The Glow, all playful pizzicato ostinatos and bouncy beats, suggests a baroque *étude* as reimagined by Lykke Li. The contrastingly meditative, reverb-kissed A Long Awaited Scar and poignantly solitary Where The Light Comes In, meanwhile, are delivered with the calm self-possession of a yoga teacher – another of the versatile Neufeld's moonlighting activities.

David Sheppard

K-X-P

★★★

III Part II

ÖM/SVART. CD/DL/LP

Stadium-friendly incantations from the ever-primal Finns.

The intense, primal, rhythm-obsessed Finns last album was 2015's, *III Part I*. Its successor is, then, the second chapter of their third album. *III Part II* was recorded at the same sessions. Like its predecessor, trance is fused with techno and hard, tribal drumming, with a topping of monk-like chanting and disembodied declarations. But this year's model is more direct than last year's. While second track Freeway – no doubt named in tribute to Kraftwerk's Autobahn – has the relentless forward motion of Neu! and Sub Goblin sticks Marshall Jefferson in a blender with Killing Joke, the album breathes more than any previous K-X-P release. The spaciousness foregrounds the band's relentless pulse and frontman Timo Kaukolampi's incantations. Hints of The KLF remain, but *III Part II* achieves the unlikely result of suggesting that these robe-clad mavericks could be as stadium-friendly as Laibach.

Kieron Tyler

Aurora: nakedly emotional, and not just for Christmas.

Aurora

★★★★

All My Demons Greeting Me As A Friend

DECCA. CD/DL/LP

Norwegian singer-songwriter's enchanting debut LP recasts anxiety as uplifting.

A cast-iron favourite of Katy Perry's, Norway's Aurora Aksnes has recently been widely heard in Britain via her version of Oasis's Half The World Away which soundtracked John Lewis's Christmas TV ad. The Bergen resident might seem to be gunning for the mainstream, but it's less clear-cut than that. Her debut album reveals the still-teenage singer-songwriter bridging the divide between the instantly anthemic and the nakedly emotional: her anxieties are exposed. Intimacy is key to the passionate *All My Demons Greeting Me As A Friend*: she grew up with, and remains influenced by, Leonard Cohen. The former single Murder Song counts down to the trigger moment with a creepy desolation. The upbeat, hook-laden Warrior celebrates escaping the cage created by isolation. Few albums meld frank postcards from the psyche with such poppy directness.

Kieron Tyler

PAUW

★★★

Macrocosm Microcosm

CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL/LP

Dutch quartet set controls for the heart of the sun.

The Netherlands' post-war reputation is all about the sex and drugs, but whatever rock'n'roll exists there rarely makes it to export. With Jakko Gardner, and now PAUW, 21st century Dutch psych finally has a little momentum; it has yet to break new ground but the source of their inspiration is fertile ground. High Tide and Memories tap a similar Madchester-era pop motherlode to Temples, but *Macrocosm Microcosm* mostly aims higher, at Tame Impala's solar flares (like Kevin Parker, guitarist Brian Pots is no true-born singer but makes his fey, dreamy presence felt), The Rain Parade's fuzzy Floyd-inspired *Emergency Third Rail Power Trip* and – by accident or not – the Netherlands' own mellotron-drizzled prog pioneers Earth And Fire. Shambhala, Abyss, Today Never Ends and the two-part Glare are lengthier odysseys, rich in startling, saturated colour, very much befitting a band whose name

WORLD

BY DAVID HUTCHEON

Sainkho Namtchylak

★★★★

Like A Bird Or Spirit, Not A Face

PONDEROSA. CD/DL

From the steppes to the Sahara, everybody's got the nomad blues.

IMAGINE A Tuvan version of France's Brigitte Fontaine – on the surface, intimidating, in reality, playful and fun – then remember Namtchylak is a throat-singer of some distinction and little compromise. The Tuvan's original plan was to collaborate with like-minded nomadic North Africans; her producer, Ian Brennan, had Tinariwen on speed dial (having helmed their *Tassili* album). Holed up in France for two days with the Tuaregs' bassist, Eyadou Ag Leche, and percussionist, Said Ag Ayad, the quartet recorded enough material for a double album. Doubtless some of it was best shelved, but what survives ranges from straightforward desert blues (Nomadic Mood) to certifiably odd experiments (Dushkan Ezim To), with all points in between covered (Erge Chokka To is the Tinariwen groove taken to another level, while Nostalgia To could be a disco hit with a decent remix). An unlikely triumph.

ALSO RELEASED

Ayub Ogada

★★★★

Kodhi

LONG TALE RECORDINGS. CD/DL

The Ugandan didn't enjoy success first time around and vanished more than 20 years ago – this suggests we all missed something special. There is barely anything here, Ogada's lyre, Trevor Warren's guitar, some chants and chat, nothing as rigid as songs, but the effect is beautifully hypnotic; a long, drifting, symphonic meander from Nairobi to the Rift Valley. Welcome back.

The Cambodian Space Project

★★★

Electric Blue Boogaloo

CHATOMUK. CD

Having failed to fall for CSP's first three albums – singer Channthy doesn't cut it to these ears – it's a pleasant surprise to report their fourth is not bad at all. A mid-album sweep that covers Pan Ron, France Gall and Yol Aularong highlights the lack of originality, but it's a raw, spunky, garage-punk certain to go down well at European festivals.

Nação Zumbi

★★★★

Nação Zumbi

CIRCULAR MOVES. CD/DL/LP

After a quarter of a century, the Brazilian hard rock outfit get round to the eponymous album: should that suggest something definitive? It is certainly more instantly accessible than some previous releases and it feels as if there is a lighter touch, the beats livelier than they are accustomed to, with surf guitar and Clash-like chords to the fore.

Aziza Brahim

★★★

Abbar El Hamada

GLITTERBEAT. CD/DL/LP

A gentle record that is astonishingly timely from a political perspective. Brahim comes from Western Sahara, a country absorbed, against many of its residents' wishes, by Morocco; she lives in Barcelona, but her songs tell of refugees and of walls built to keep out the displaced. Her West African/European band avoid the debate, however, and transcend boundaries with ease. *DH*

FILTER ALBUMS

Purson: facing the strange in all its Technicolor glory.

Unloved

★★★★

Guilty Of Love

UNLOVED. CD/DL/LP

David Holmes' new band, with guests such as Wayne Kramer, make a smoky entrance.

Having produced, scored, remixed and compiled, rare groove connoisseur David Holmes has finally got round to forming a band. Whether crate-digging is exhausting or else he's bored by people passing off his finds as their own, but this collaboration with soundtrack composer Keefus Ciancia and vocalist Jade Vincent evokes the smoky gems previously peppering Holmes's compilations and soundtracks. A *noir* mix of bass grooves and halting, Nico-ish vocals, *Guilty Of Love* boasts an atmosphere seemingly bottled in The Scotch Of St James in 1966, yet Unloved dodge historical recreation society status. The lush Cry Baby Cry is experimentally expansive, while Xpectations twitches with unsettling, modern urgency. The poppy title track truly surges with vintage vim, but Holmes and co's innovation ensures that while they nod to the past they also look to the future.

Paul Stokes

UNLOVED
Guilty of Love

Anthrax

★★★

For All Kings

NUCLEAR BLAST. CD/DL/LP

Energised eleventh album from Queens Of The Stone Age's thrash forefathers.

Neither as objectionable as Megadeth nor as self-righteous as Metallica, Anthrax brought East Coast smarts to the nascent thrash scene; Slayer had the ferocity but Scott Ian's band possessed a ragged charm, colourful aesthetic and wider world-view. That some two dozen band members have passed through their doors doesn't seem to have diluted their sound greatly. From the Game Of Thrones-filching opener Impaled, their current near-classic line-up leap straight into the wailing You Gotta Believe before Breathing Lightning recalls the greasy-skinned, sullen NWOBHM bands who appeared so exotic Stateside. Few could have predicted speed/thrash metal's largely adolescent concerns – galloping guitars, nihilistic lyrics, maximum sonic brutality at all times – would outlive so many of rock's sub-genres, yet Anthrax's energised take, though hardly original, remains forceful and persuasive with each member still delivering with the strength of 10 men.

Ben Myers

Grant-Lee Phillips

★★★★

The Narrows

YEP ROC. CD/DL/LP

Former Grant Lee Buffalo singer moves south again, pens some songs of the soil.

GRANT-LEE PHILLIPS

"There's a crack in the Earth running up the Golden State," warns Phillips on San Andreas Fault. "When the big one comes you'll want to be out this way." Threat of earthquakes aside, it was the promise of a quieter life that prompted his 2013 relocation to Nashville, where *The Narrows* was birthed at Dan Auerbach's Easy Eye Studio. Self-produced and tracked with manifest passion and finesse alongside drummer Jerry Roe and bassist Lex Price, it sees Phillips tap into his Cherokee heritage on resonant ballad Moccasin Creek and the sweltering heat/rusted-tin guitar-imbued Taking On Weight In Hot Springs. The train beat rockabilly of Loaded Gun, country honk rhythm-guitar on Rolling Pin, and smouldering song of hope/redemption Smoke And Sparks are similarly gratifying, Phillips's particular strain of Americana in robust health.

James McNair

M. Ward

★★★

More Rain

BELLA UNION. CD/LP/DL

Seventh solo album for recent Mavis Staples producer and Monster Of Folk.

There's always a touch of sepia to Matthew Ward's solo music, which could just as easily be croaking out of a 1930s radiogram as Spotify, but *More Rain* is other-level stuff. Packed with modern hooks and guests such as Peter Buck and Neko Case, yet first conceived as a doo wop album, it's loaded with wah-wa-wahs and do-doo-be-dos, the transitional period between bobby-soxer big bands and rock'n'roll oozing from the likes of I'm Listening (Child's Theme) and even the rusty tremolo twang of Temptation. Long-resident in damp and grey Portland, Oregon, Ward opens *More Rain* with the sound of a deluge outside before going on to ponder the vast gulf between the American Dream and its less glamorous reality, but with the final glitterbeat stomp of I'm Going Higher he finishes with the sun on his face.

Andy Fyfe

Various

★★★★

A Hard Day's Night Treatment

ECC. LP

Brit folkers and indie stargazers transform Beatles classics into luxurious repose.

A Hard Day's Night Treatment

In collaboration with Imagined Villager and Afro Celt-in-Chief Simon Emmerson, the Lush organisation's admirable commitment to vinyl soars several notches with this elegiac re-make of some of The Beatles' dreamier tracks. Immaculately packaged and beautifully recorded, it features Eliza Carthy, Jackie Oates, Marry Waterson and One Eskimo, among others, sashaying gracefully through Fixing A Hole, Michelle, Strawberry Fields et al. Emmerson's determination to avoid the mundane is well-rewarded by imaginative rhythms incorporating trip-hop and jazz, achieving notable highs on Sheema Mukherjee's evocative sitar treatment of Norwegian Wood and the Space Cadets' gently rousing Flying. Mop-topism is further eradicated by the yearning vocals of Rosie Doonan, Martha Tilston and Stealing Sheep on A Hard Day's Night, Ticket To Ride and I Want To Hold Your Hand respectively. With samples and sound effects (bird song, trains) and a USB with extra tracks and live footage, it's a gem.

Colin Irwin

Purson

★★★★

Desire's Magic Theatre

SPINEFARM. CD/DL/LP

Beguiling dark carnival of on-point retro-rock oddness.

Purson's 2013 debut was a swirling, occasionally brilliant musical fug of occult rock; all swirling hash smoke, crushed purple velvet and Witchfinder General hats. More sophisticated songwriting and sharper production now suggests their prog complexities and dark folk flourishes were neither fluke nor hip flirtation. With its harpsichord waltzes, flutes and slinky jazz coda, the opening title track shows a band fully facing the strange in all its Technicolor glory. Rosalie Cunningham's dark-hued vocals recall Grace Slick's and Desire's Magic Theatre really is a slippery rabbit hole of a trip, a misfit alternative to Florence Welch's mainstream oddness. The sax-laden Pedigree Chums, the uplifting glam-romp of Mr Howard, and the Doors baroque of The Bitter Suite all add texture to what feels like the imagined soundtrack to a particularly malevolent mesmerist's variety show.

Ben Myers

Matt Corby

★★★

Telluric

ATLANTIC. CD/DL/LP

Antipodean folk-soul with a funked-up underbelly.

Distilling the influences of musicians as disparate as Jeff Buckley, Lauryn Hill, Buddy Guy and Radiohead, this 25-year-old Sydney-born troubadour has developed his own gritty but laidback style, a synthesis of folk, rock and soul elements filtered through a singer-songwriter sensibility. After a series of well-received indie EPs dating back to 2009, Corby signed to Atlantic in 2013 and cut an album in LA, which he disliked and discarded. Now, Corby finally serves up his revamped debut, its title translating into "of the soil and earth". Production is dense, grainy and atmospheric, with Corby's layered vocals to the fore. Monday, transcendent gospel-soul with soaring antiphonals, is a standout, as are South Lady Wine and Knife Edge, both propelled by loose-limbed jazzy grooves.

Charles Waring

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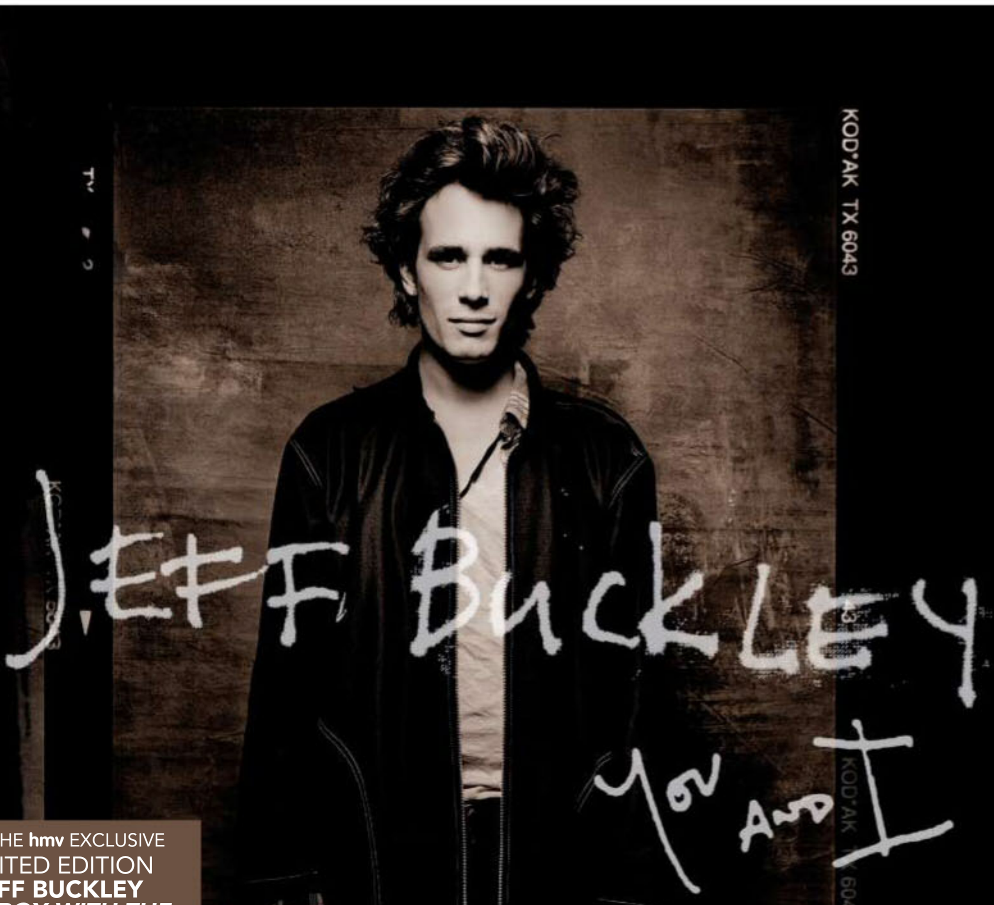

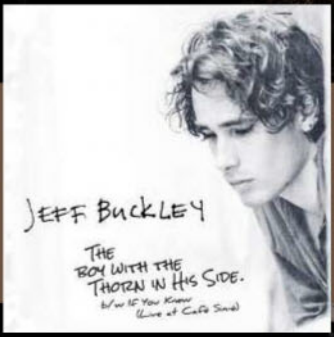
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LEGACY
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FILTER ALBUMS EXTRA

Federico Albanese

★★★

The Blue Hour

NEUE MEISTER. CD/DL/LP

Inspired by the tremulous light of dawn and dusk, Berlin-based composer Albanese's piano plus synths and cello soundtrack near-darkness in pensive, drifting instrumentals; Céline has a warm, electronic pulse. *JB*

Pete Aves

★★★★

See How

STRESS TESTED. CD/DL

Dissecting his divorce and subsequent existential crises in a showman's croon, the former High Llama may be low, but this is no menopausal weepy; God Bless The Poor and a bossa soul take on Pharrell's Happy shake that midlife rump. *JB*

THE GREATEST LOVE
MARTY BALIN

Marty Balin

★★★

The Greatest Love

WIENERWORLD. CD/DL

Hearty, heartfelt, home-made new solo LP by the Jefferson Airplane singer, preoccupied – on Surprise, Stripper – with the fun you don't have when dressed. Best is Scheherazade – it begs for late-'60s Kantner/Airplane arrangement. *CP*

The Drones

★★★

Feeling Kinda Free

TFS. CD/DL/LP

Melbourne's sonic outlaws serve up a seventh LP of fevered narrative bile to a synapse-altering soundtrack of heavy rhythmic rock, hip hop, brooding synths, woodwind and percussion. Like a Gibby Haynes-fronted Bongwater. *JB*

Chris Forsyth & The Solar Motel Band

★★★

The Rarity Of Experience

NO QUARTER. CD/DL/LP

Philadelphian Forsyth and tight band on a mostly instrumental set of spiralling guitars and scalp-prickling grooves. *JB*

THE DAY IS NOT TODAY
THE LITTLE FLAMES

The Little Flames

★★★

The Day Is Not Today

DELTASONIC. CD/DL/LP

Left on the shelf since 2007 – the pre-Last Shadow Puppets Miles Kane split to form The Rascals and frontwoman Eva Petersen went solo – this well-liked Wirral band's swirling Scouse psych-lite gets belated but welcome release. *CP*

The Prettiots

★★★★

Funs Cool

ROUGH TRADE. CD/DL/LP

Beefing-up the anti-folk blueprint with drums and electric guitars, there's a dark, delicious humour and true heartbreak in the NY trio's frank yet delicate confessionals of failed romances, doomed dates and coping with it all. *PS*

Miike Snow

★★★

iii

DOWNTOWN/ATLANTIC. CD/DL/LP

As with Hot Chip, Miike Snow's is an exuberant electronic take on indie pop. Closer listening finds thin-voiced New Yorker Andrew Wyatt undercutting the Swedish Britney Spears producers' sleek earworms with sing-along melancholy. *AC*

Thao & The Get Down Stay Down

★★★

A Man Alive

RIBBON MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

Thao Nguyen's fourth pairs her pithy, infectious songs with the production skills of Tune-Yards' Merrill Garbus on a set she says charts her relationship with her father. Like families, it's appealingly chaotic. *JB*

THE THREE DEGREES
STRATEGY
OUR TRIBUTE TO PHILADELPHIA

The Three Degrees

★★★

Strategy

CHERRY RED. CD/DL

Subtitled *Our Tribute To Philadelphia*, but made in Atlanta, the Philly legends (Helen Scott and Valerie Holiday still there) revisit Love Train, Disco Inferno and other Gamble & Huff hits. Ain't no stoppin' them now! *GB*

Carter Tanton

★★★★

Jettison The Valley

WESTERN VINYL. CD/DL/LP

Baltimore multi-instrumentalist prodigy, collaborators have included War On Drugs, and here, guest vocalists Sharon Van Etten and Marissa Nadler. His own voice is a marvel, too, heartfelt and luminous, like a housetrained Ryan Adams. *JB*

PETE YORN ARRANGING TIME

Pete Yorn

★★★

Arranging Time

VIRGIN EMI. CD/DL/LP

In contrast to 2010's raw, self-titled LP, album six is buffed to indie-luxe beat-heavy production perfection, like an Ed Sheeranised David Gray. Bashful, R.E.M.-ish Halifax is lovely but, all told, less might have been more. *JB*

yuck
Stranger Things

Yuck

★★

Stranger Things

MAMÉ. CD/DL/LP

London's Yuck offer scrubbed-up take on the FX-drenched guitar pop of Pavement or MBV. The title track has a sliver of country-rock tastiness, but in all this is the kind of FM mulch to which those '80s originators provided a lively alternative. *AP*

Yeti Lane

★★★★

L'Aurore

SONIC CATHEDRAL. CD/DL/LP

Parisian duo make good on that Amon Düül II-referencing name with a trance-heavy opening wave of guitars on third LP. It gives way to creeping synths, much post-rock elation and an epic finale, sung in French with nape-raising efficacy. *JB*

NOWSTREAMING

Vodun

Legba's Feast

Vodun are on a one-way genre collision-course. The delightfully named trio of Ogoun, The Marassa and Oya transcended their roots in London psych outfits Invasion and Do Me Bad Things when they joined forces in the early 2010s, scaring the bejesus out of livegoers with voodoo-styled shows daubed in body paint. Like Aretha fronting Royal Blood after imbibing ayahuasca, Legba's Feast jolts from idle percussive pitter-patter and axe noodling into a riff-laced groove fest, Oya's primal vocals invoking "a feast so gluttonous the gods cannot deny". It's lifted from Vodun's debut *Possession*, a similarly unearthly, neck-snapping mélange of Afrobeat, R&B and death metal pressed on natty orange vinyl. (SoundCloud) *AC*

Ash Koosha

Mudafossil

Hotly touted as the next Flying Lotus, Iranian Koosha has a fondness for jarring sound collages; with displaced violin fragments spiking juddering subatomic bass. (SoundCloud)

Mongrels

You Dig Raps?

"Sticking to my guns like permanent adhesive," Sheffield street art don Kid Acne returns in lo-fi fashion, spitting hardy homilies over crackly golden-era jazz loops. (SoundCloud)

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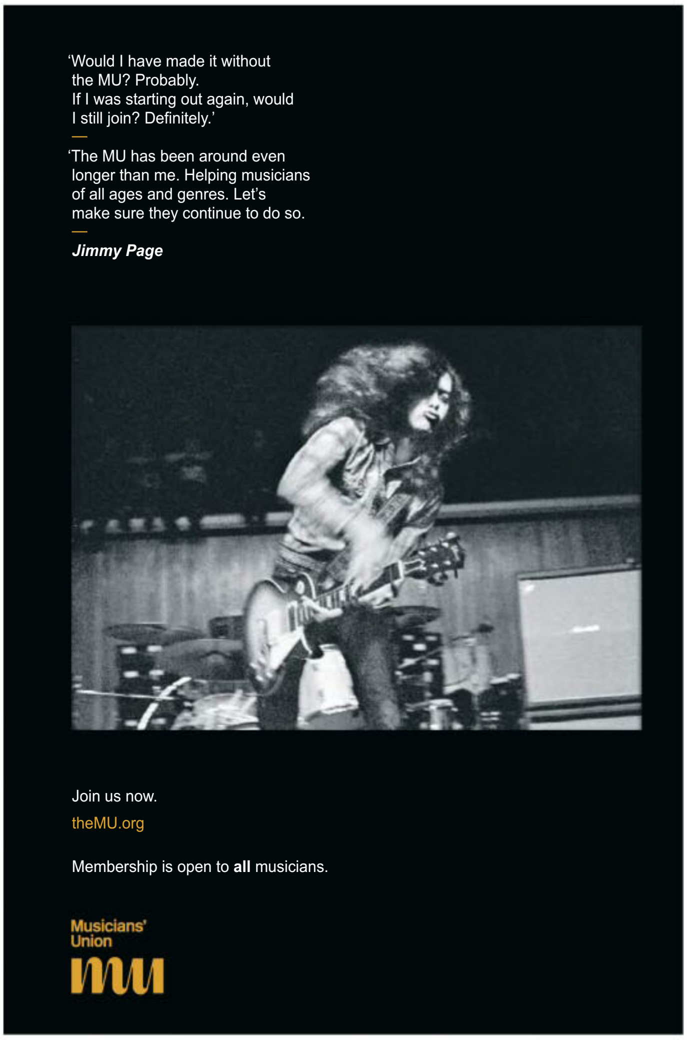

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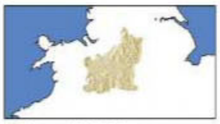

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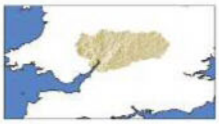

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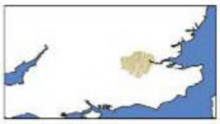

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MOJO STORE OF THE MONTH

Lion Coffee + Record, a coffee shop, record store and venue on the Lower Clapton Road, a one-of-a-kind space in the heart of Hackney. Lion opened on the 8th of August 2014, The venue has had artists such as Courtney Love, Gruff Rhys, The Garden, Pale, King Tutt, Laura Jane Grace, Splashh & Gabriel Bruce (to name a few) play exclusive gigs in the intimate venue. A passion for music, art and coffee is at the heart of Lion, as well as supporting new talent such as Davey James, Daniel Glover, Shannon Wardrop, Wyldeck and more. The future is bright and there are big plans for art and photography exhibitions, gigs, events and much more that plan to bring the Clapton & Hackney community together.
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NEW FROM PROPER MUSIC

UNLOVED
GUILTY OF LOVE

UNLOVED
Guilty of Love

Unloved are spearheaded by David Holmes, in collaboration with film and TV composer Keefus Ciancia (True Detective), and vocalist Jade Vincent. They are born of 60s girl groups, influenced by the great George 'Shadow' Morton, Jack Nitzsche, the soundtracks of Morricone, Nino Rota and the electronic sounds of Raymond Scott.
"If you are going to pre-order any album – I would pre-order this." – LAUREN LAVERNE
UNLOVED RECORDS

MATT ANDERSEN
HONEST MAN

MATT ANDERSEN HONEST MAN

Honest Man follows up the JUNO Award nominated *Weightless* and sees the songwriter pushing himself into new territory. Blessed with a rich gospel soul voice and armed with a new set of songs, Matt Andersen found a perfect partner in crime with Commissioner Gordon.
JDSS

JD & THE STRAIGHT SHOT
BALLYHOO!

BALLYHOO!
JD & THE STRAIGHT SHOT

The continued evolution of JD & The Straight Shot now sees singer-songwriter Jim Dolan fronting a four person group as the band explores a stripped-down version of its sound. It's steeped in the quiet fire of Americana, with distinctive elements of the blues and mystical, rustic New Orleans-flavoured roots music.
TRUE NORTH

ANDREW CRESSWELL DAVIS
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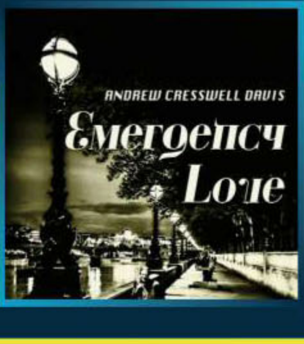


A former member of Stackridge and The Korgis, Andrew Cresswell Davis also played guitar on John Lennon's *Imagine* album. Now, he returns with an absolutely stunning album with a mixture of pop, rock, roots and some classical influences.
ANGEL AIR

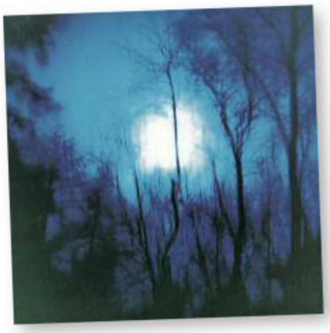
FOR MORE MUSIC NEWS VISIT:
WWW.PROPERDISTRIBUTION.COM

Country feedback

Three albums from 'Phase One' of David Pearce's mid-'90s "rural psychedelia" project are remastered on vinyl. **Andrew Male** has his pastoral mind blown.

Flying Saucer Attack
Reissues

DOMINO. LP



When David Pearce returned with a new Flying Saucer Attack LP last summer, one key element was noticeable by its absence. The clue was in the titles. From the hazy cymbalon melancholy of Instrumental 2 to the Keiji Haino feedback screams of Instrumental 6, *Instrumentals 2015* brought together 15 lo-fi, home-recorded vocal-free attenuated blues, spanning 12 years of therapeutic on-off musical experiment, cut on dying 8-tracks, or recorded live to cassette and CD-R. Part silent protest, part admittance of defeat, from a musician returning to an industry he no longer recognised, the lack of vocals on *Instrumentals 2015* also felt like a superior aesthetic decision, an artistic culmination of sorts, in which Pearce's voice and identity had at last become subsumed within the windblown, numinous world he had first conjured up some 22 years ago.

Listening back to *Distance* ★★★ the 1994 collection of early FSA singles, released in the wake of the group's 1993 LP debut, and the first of these new vinyl-only Domino reissues, it's striking how Pearce's band emerged almost fully formed from the start. Born in the late 1960s, Pearce had been making a variety of lo-fi psychedelia in and around Gloucestershire since the mid '80s, music influenced by Syd Barrett, Popol Vuh, his solitary Cotswolds childhood, and the folk isolationism of Roy Harper, John Martyn and Nick Drake. Studying at Farnham Art College, Pearce briefly recorded with Richard Walker, Guy Cooper and Gareth Mitchell (later of electronic dream-rockers Amp) before moving to Bristol to work at fabled record store Revolver. There he joined the shop's auto-destruction garage-noise house band, Linda's Strange Vacation, formed by a group of close-knit former school friends, future Movietone founders Rachel Brook and Kate Wright, and Matt Elliott, who subsequently went on to record as Third Eye Foundation. After that band split (thanks largely to this newcomer's desire to push them in the direction of song craft), Pearce formed an alliance with Brook, and recording on her brother's 4-track, with Elliott helping out on percussion, Flying Saucer Attack were born.

Along with those earlier psych and folk influences, Pearce was inspired by the distorted dream-pop of Loop and A.R. Kane, and the lo-fi storm warnings of New Zealand noise label Xpressway, to increase the tension between melody and distortion that was already there in his favourite records. Early FSA recordings like Crystal Shade and Soaring High are psych-pop gems, but with folk's reassuring drone now driving the melody and psychedelia's idyllic feedback highs saturating the edges, as Pearce's impassive spectral vocals are willingly submerged by the briery squall. Elsewhere, on tracks such as Oceans and November Mist, where buffeting noisescapes smothered Pearce's bright melodies and distant, pensive lyrics, Flying Saucer Attack were taking the old concept of pastoral folk into far stranger territories, a place in which the countryside was no longer a benign arcadian space, but something supernatural, uncanny, a gateway to some other, ill-lighted dimension.

Recorded with Brook, Elliott and Bristol DJ/drummer, Rocker for Bill Kellum's VHF label, the group's self-titled debut LP was Pearce's first complete mission statement. Subtitled *"Rural Psychedelia"*, it combined the somnambulist noise-pop of My Dreaming Hill and Make Me Dream with more experimental *kosmische* rumblings, signposted as Popol Vuh 2 and Popol Vuh 1. But it was on the closing track, The Season Is Ours, that all future FSA elements coalesced perfectly. A frail mist-wreathed folk song overwhelmed by the darker rumblings of a more elemental nature, The Season Is Ours pointed the way to the sublime, outsider folk that was 1994's *Further* ★★★★.

Beginning with the deeply creepy Rainstorm Blues – rippling echoes of air-raid sirens and string sections of scything guitars beneath a storm-battered corrugated roof – *Further* dragged the doomed introspective strangeness of Nick Drake's *Pink Moon* into a disorientating twilight world of encroaching cosmic horror, as if Drake's "things behind the sun" had finally made themselves known.

However, it was with another compilation LP, *Chorus* ★★★★, that Pearce's "rural psychedelia" achieved a state of shadowy perfection. A May 1994 Peel session, bolstered by stray singles and compilation tracks, *Chorus* shouldn't work as a complete vision, but does. Beginning with the ethereal beatless dread of Feedback Song – effectively a reworking of Fairport Convention's A Sailor's Life, but relocated to a watery threshold between this world and some other troubling realm – *Chorus* hums and throbs with an transcendent reverberant power. Pearce strums his bright acoustic guitar as he recites forlorn waking-dream lyrics of lost love and wild nature against ruined choirs of electric dischord, words like spells, as if *Chorus* were some kind of pagan incantation, a strange language designed to invoke something ancient and terrifying.

When Domino released *Chorus*, the linernotes stated that it marked the end of FSA "Phase One", with "Phase Two" to follow. For these vinyl reissues, Domino have stuck to the same plan, with the "Phase Two" reissues, 1997's *New Lands* and 2000's *Mirror*, to come later in the year. In recent interviews, Pearce has described the idea of Phase Two as both a mistake and joke that backfired. Listening to the records that constituted Phase One, the odd thing is how modern they sound, 20 years after they were first released, their influence audible in the phased dream-pop of Ariel Pink, Real Estate, Grouper and Deerhunter, the washed-out amp-noise of Tim Hecker, the medieval death-folk of Natural Snow Buildings, and the haunted sonic territories occupied by The Caretaker and the Ghost Box label. Pearce's voice may be silent right now but whatever ghostly spirits he conjured up all those years ago are still tangibly abroad in this world.

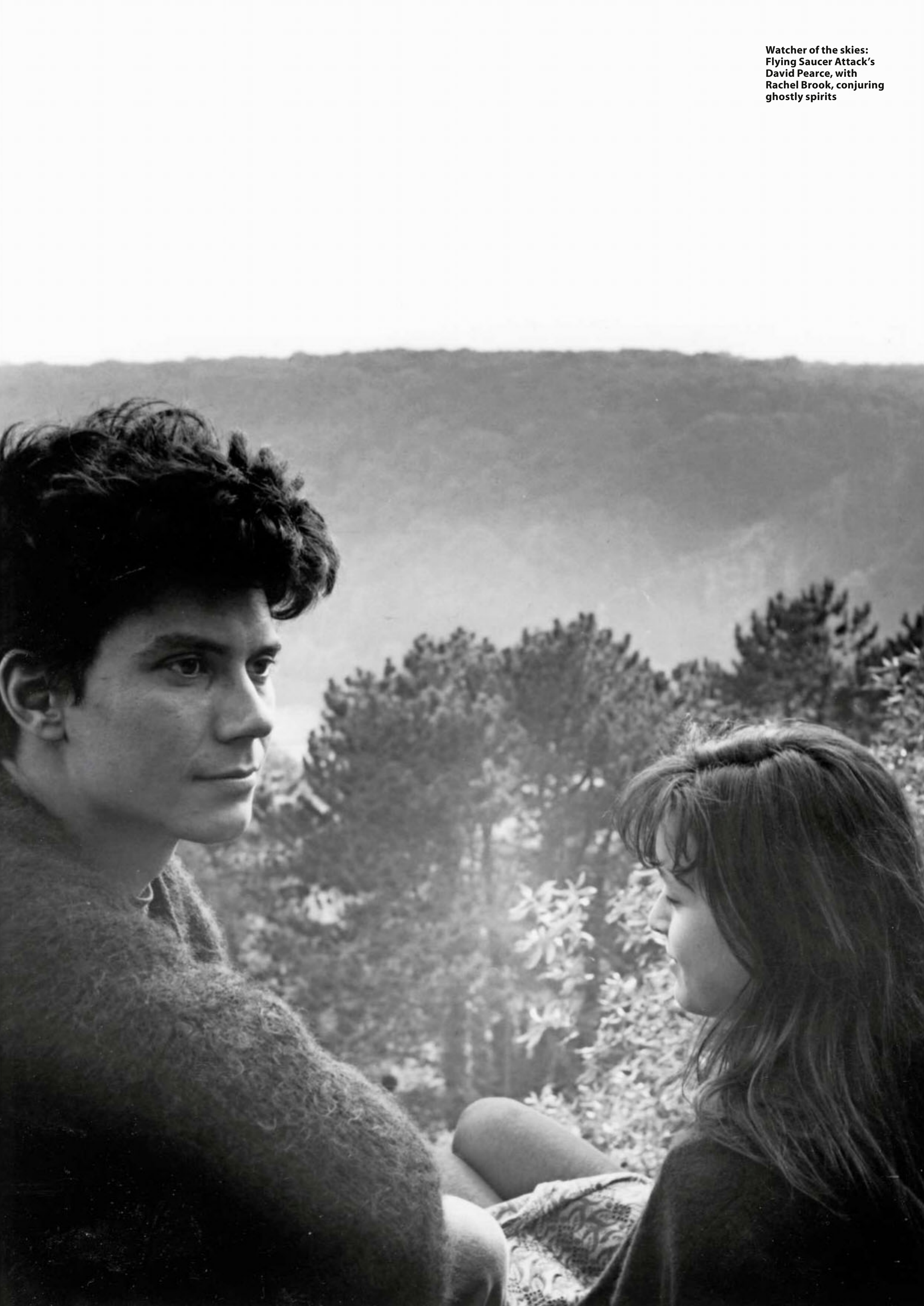
KEY TRACKS
- Rainstorm Blues
- Oceans
- Feedback Song
- Always

"RIPPLING ECHOES OF AIR-RAID SIRENS AND STRING SECTIONS OF SCYTHING GUITARS BENEATH A STORM-BATTERED ROOF."

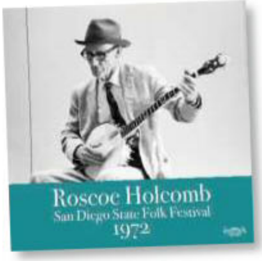
RICHARD KING
ORIGINAL ROCKERS
FABER & FABER

BACK STORY: REVOLUTION IN THE WEST

● Keen to explore the wider underground scene seeded by Bristol's Revolver record shop? Start with former employee Richard King's excellent memoir, Original Rockers (Faber & Faber, 2015), then try these albums (this reviewer's favourites, in chronological order): Amp's *Perception* (Darla, 1997); Third Eye Foundation's *Ghost* (Domino, 1997); Light's *Turning* (Wurlitzer Jukebox, 1997); Crescent's *Collected Songs* (Swarf-finger, 1999); Movietone's *The Sand And The Stars* (Drag City, 2003). Also hear Pearce's 2003 album with Jessica Bailiff, *Clear Horizon* (Kranky, 2003).



Watcher of the skies: Flying Saucer Attack's David Pearce, with Rachel Brook, conjuring ghostly spirits



Roscoe Holcomb

★★★★

San Diego State Folk Festival 1972

TOMPKINS SQUARE. CD/DL/LP

The first full-length concert recording of a towering figure in Appalachian music.

Spare, self-deprecating and unassumingly suited, Roscoe Holcomb, a former miner and manual labourer from south-eastern Kentucky, appeared on a number of folk festival stages in the 1960s and early '70s. Initially, his calling cards were the Folkways LP and documentary film made by John Cohen, both called *The High Lonesome Sound*, but the moment he gave a performance, no further introduction was required: his steel-hard, knife-sharp singing and tempestuous banjo and guitar playing seemed like the very bones and sinews of Appalachian old-time music. In this set, presciently taped by festival organiser Lou Curtiss, he mostly sings pieces he is known for, like Old Smoky, Little Birdie or Graveyard Blues, but he closes with an old lament, Wandering Boy, sung with Jean Ritchie in the slow 'lined-out' style, whose sombre beauty lingers long after he has left the stage.

Tony Russell

Various

★★★★

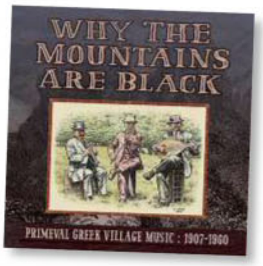
Why The Mountains Are Black: Primeval Greek Village Music, 1907-1960

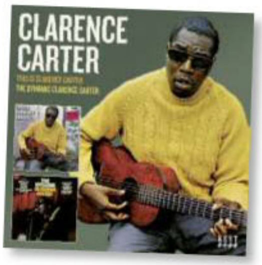
THIRD MAN. CD/LP

A panoramic map of Greek country music in the 1900s.

Most of these extraordinary performances were given in formal studios in cities (Athens, New York, Chicago), yet they evoke, sometimes exhilaratingly, sometimes achingly, the landscape of village or island and the country calendar of weddings, dances and death. Nearly all were recorded in the '20s and '30s, contemporary with the first rembetika, and a few of the musicians, like violinist Demetrios Semsis, played in that idiom too, but the melodies and approaches heard here are rooted in an older sensibility and expressed through a wondrous variety of sounds – bagpipes, flute, clarinet, violin, the Cretan lyra, twisting and combining in heart-stopping arabesques. The sometimes curious stories behind these rare 78s are recounted by Christopher King, who collected them for this 2-CD set, a successor to his compilations of northern Greek music for Angry Mom, *Five Days Married & Other Laments* and *Alexis Zoumbas*.

Tony Russell


WHY THE MOUNTAINS ARE BLACK
PRIMEVAL GREEK VILLAGE MUSIC : 1907-1960



Clarence Carter

★★★★

This Is Clarence Carter/The Dynamic Clarence Carter

KENT. CD/DL

The Montgomery, Alabama singer's '68 Atlantic debut plus its follow-up.

Teaming with producer Rick Hall at Fame studios in Muscle Shoals, Carter, who began his recording career at the start of the decade for Don Robey's Duke, hit with a series of singles: Looking For A Fox, Thread The Needle, Slip Away, Funky Fever, which plumbed the Southern soul sound. These make up the majority of his debut album, 1968's *This Is…*, although it's the non singles that stop you in your tracks; a heart-wrenching Do What You Gotta Do, a bluesy, slow-burnin' Part Time Love. By the time of its follow-up, 1969's *The Dynamic …*, Duane Allman had joined the Fame house band adding rock to Carter's rolling soul. The gutsy Road Of Love and a pitiful I'd Rather Go Blind provide that album's grandstanding moments.

Lois Wilson

Various

★★★★

Studio One Showcase: The Sound of Studio One In The 1970s

SOUL JAZZ. CD/DL/LP

More great roots reggae from the Studio One archives (if not the 1970s).

After launching the career of Bob Marley, Ken Boothe and many other important Jamaican singers in the ska years, Clement Dodd's Studio One outfit issued some cool rocksteady and innovative early reggae, and despite the subsequent rise of smaller challengers, the mid-1970s provided a time of invigoration for the label. Confusingly, Soul Jazz's *Studio One Showcase* does not draw from the three volumes of extended-play format LPs Dodd issued in the late '70s under that name (and featured tracks like Frankie Wilmoth's Stay With Me date from the '80s), but the music's so great such inconsistencies don't really matter. From Horace Andy's See A Man's Face and Sugar Minott's Have No Fear to Freddie McGregor's Bredda Labba Labba and The Gladiators' Tribulation, this is top-class roots, delivered with style by superb singers, voiced over Studio One's perennially popular rhythms.

David Katz

Maynard Ferguson

★★★

Storm

OMNIVORE. CD/DL

Controversial jazz trumpeter gets funky in the early '80s.

A protégé of Stan Kenton's innovative late-'40s/early-'50s ensemble, Maynard Ferguson was constantly updating and modernising big band jazz in the '60s and '70s, even if that meant upsetting the jazz police by including pop, rock and disco material in his repertoire. A fertile but extremely chequered 13-year spell at CBS between 1969 and 1982 yielded music that could excite and infuriate in equal measure. While his music vacillated between the sublime and the ridiculous, Ferguson's imperious trumpet playing and facility for hitting ear-splitting, dog-summoning high notes was the only constant. 1983's *Storm* was his first post-CBS recording (originally for Palo Alto) and one of his best from that decade, blending sticky funk with strutting Latino grooves and bebop-inspired charts (including a finger-clicking jazz retooling of the theme tune to the US kid's TV show, Sesame Street).

Charles Waring

Streetwalkers

★★★

I'm Walking: Complete Streetwalkers

SNAPPER. CD

Fifteen CDs, a lavishly illustrated book… four beermats – this is the definitive £125 box set.

Loud, lairy and with a singer whose yowl could stun small animals, Streetwalkers were a more exciting proposition than your average blues-rock sluggers of the mid-1970s. Vocalist Roger Chapman and guitarist Charlie Whitney had dumped the vibraphone, fiddle and hippy moments of their previous band, Family, to concentrate on a soulful brand of hard rock. Streetwalkers' original five albums are supplemented by BBC sessions and live recordings; most excellent quality, a few bootleg-rough. Given the band's short career, there's a lot of repetition: sundry line-ups stomp through Walking On Waters 10 times and Toenail Draggin' nine; old Family hits Burlesque and My Friend The Sun pepper the live sets. Still, if you have fond memories of an underrated crew whose main crime was to be in the firing line when punk erupted, this elegantly packaged set goes some way to restoring their place in the '70s pantheon.

John Bungey

Various

The Other Side Of The Trax: Stax Volt 45rpm Rarities 1964-1968

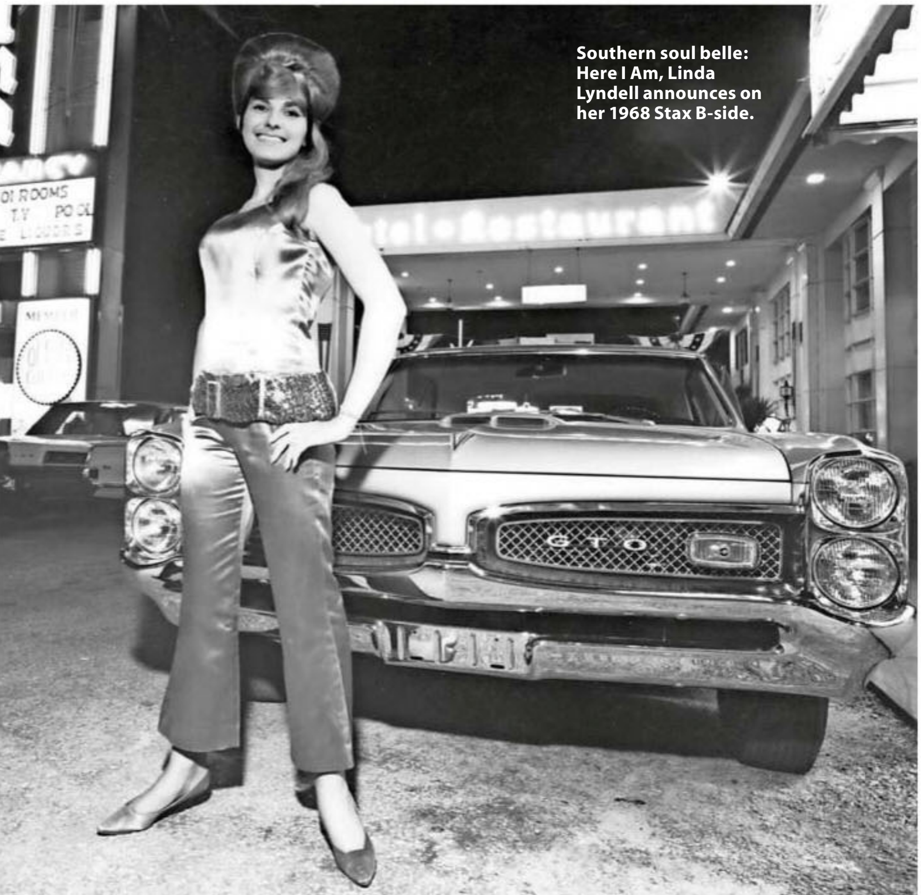
★★★★

KENT. CD DL

First-time CD issue for two dozen soul B-sides, all of them great.

As all DJs know, the flip-side is often where it's at and so it is with blue period Stax; the 24 B-sides from the label's golden age making their CD debut here could all conceivably have been top sides, such is their allure. Johnny Taylor flips bookend the selection from Changes, the B-side to his 1966 label debut I Had A Dream, to '68's Strange Things, which backed Somebody's Sleeping In My Bed. Both are fab Otis Redding-style dancers with blaring horns. Elsewhere, Barbara And The Browns' You Belong To Her from 1964 is pure anguish, Brown's heartbreak vocal framed in sparse guitar and doo wop harmonies. Carla Thomas's 1967 flip Separation, meanwhile, captures the Queen Of Stax at her most sassy on a glorious Isaac Hayes and David Porter-penned uptown number.

Lois Wilson



Southern soul belle: Here I Am, Linda Lyndell announces on her 1968 Stax B-side.

Jeff Buckley, back when he was still finding his way.

He did them his way

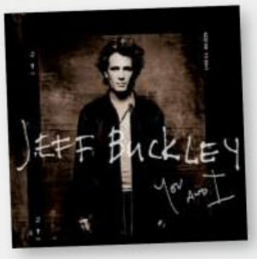
A promising young singer makes debut recordings for his label with one guitar, one original song and eight cover versions. By Jim Irvin.

Jeff Buckley

★★

You And I

COLUMBIA. CD/DL/LP



IN A 2003 BBC documentary, Jeff Buckley's drummer Matt Johnson testified to the effect of *Grace* upon its fans. "He could awaken people's sense of who they were… you feel like doing something you never do when you listen to music like that." I was at the Garage in Islington during Buckley's first UK visit when Radiohead, then working on *The Bends*, came to see if they could believe their ears. We all know where that evening took Thom Yorke's voice and, by extension, Coldplay, Muse et al. Buckley had enough stuff to fuel a generation. One record was all it took.

And yet here is another. On each of the posthumous releases there is music that shouldn't have been made public, being either too sketchy, too clumsily performed or, in the case of one of the lures here, Dream Of You And I, not even a song, just a fragment of music with Buckley describing a dream he'd had. "As long as you got that on tape I'll remember that," he says when it's over. We've just listened to a voice memo. That became You And I, notable for its opening line about the "calm below that poisoned river wild", whose own trial run was issued on *Sketches For My Sweetheart The Drunk*. It doesn't appear on this album named after it. Which is the kind of irritating editorial decision that has marred these releases.

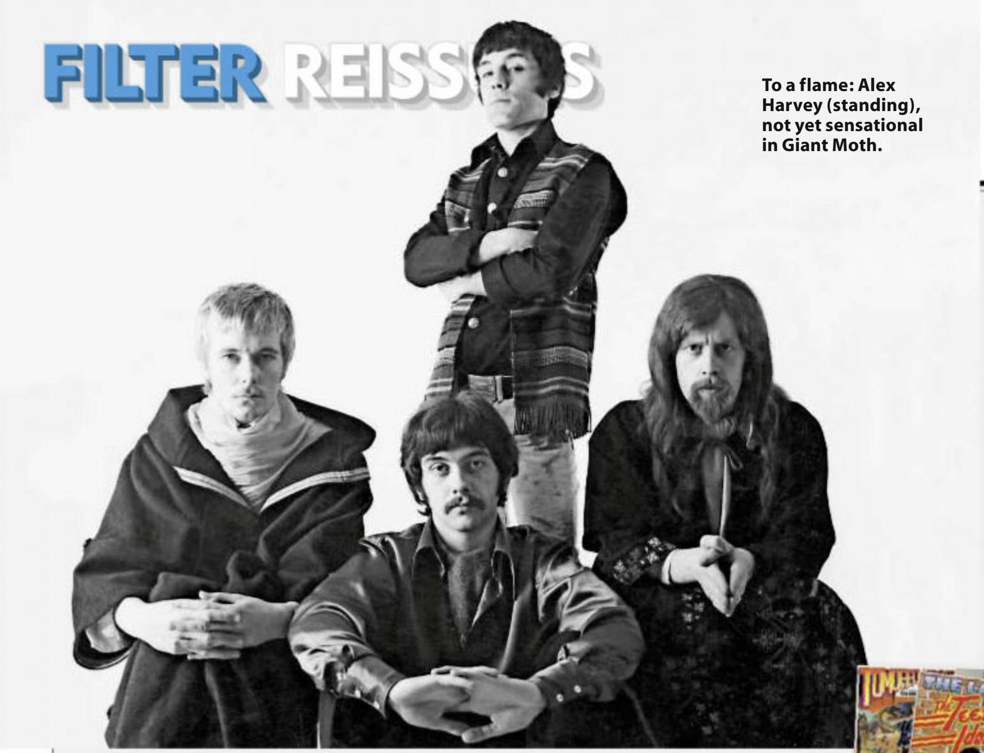
The material here, covers of Bob Dylan, Sly Stone, The Smiths, Led Zeppelin and Bukka White, came from a session cut shortly after Buckley signed to Columbia, to capture the atmosphere of his electrifying solo performances at the Sin-é cafe on St Mark's Place, New York. On this evidence it's safe to say it didn't work, so they recorded him *in situ* and the Live At Sin-é EP became his debut release.

In that documentary, Buckley admits to perfectionism, because he knows an album is forever, not fleeting like a live performance. He didn't live to see the age where everything a musician does – soundchecks, rehearsals, shrugged off cable TV interviews, you name it – is caught in the amber of YouTube to eternally chip away at the magic. Dream Of You And I would be interesting in a podcast, but, other than as a bonus track, doesn't belong on an album by a man who had the power to unnerve his idols.

Like Jimmy Page and Robert Plant, who loved *Grace* and also went to witness him live. "It was scary," said Page. Though he might admire the faithful Bukka White cover, Poor Boy, I can't imagine Page being scared by the scrappy version of Night Flight – nobody's favourite Led Zep song – or indeed anyone thinking of it, "Wow, the world's gotta hear this." *Grace* was a word of mouth classic, passed on by people who listened awestruck to nothing else for a while, a practically flawless work. This is a record of someone clearing his throat. Someone gifted, obviously, but still finding his path.

Upside? There's an intense first crack at Grace itself, sounding impatient to be born. A cover of Calling You, from '80s cult movie Bagdad Café (another version appears on the expanded Sin-é EP), that's pretty shiversome. And I prefer Buckley singing Smiths songs to Morrissey, though Jeff pays homage to Mozza's excruciatingly flat ad libs at the close of I Know It's Over by leaning out of tune himself, unable to shake off his skill at mimicry.

I've no doubt that had he lived, Buckley would have made albums of hard rock, soul and, er, Pakistani devotional music by now, veered all over the place like his dad, not in tribute but because he couldn't help himself, the changeling who adapted to his associates and his surroundings, his head filled with so many musics. I'm sure his trajectory would have been akin to that of Bowie, starward then across the universe at will. Yes, like every fan, when he died I wished there was more music to enjoy, but it would have been way cooler if *Grace* had been the final word, leaving his reputation unsullied by ho-hum affairs like this. Anyway, it's done now. Worth a listen, but not game-changing.



To a flame: Alex Harvey (standing), not yet sensational in Giant Moth.

Sensationalism

The mother lode for Harvey fans: a 14-disc box-set comprising 217 tracks. By James McNair.

Alex Harvey

★★★★

The Last Of The Teenage Idols

UNIVERSAL MUSIC CATALOGUE. CD

GLASGOW'S CHARISMATIC superhero Alex Harvey would have been 81 on February 4. Only now, though, some 35 years after his passing to a heart attack aged 46, do we have a box that corrals his four-decade career. On paper such tardiness smacks of oversight, but the truth is probably more prosaic: until now, nobody had the tenacity, sleuthing skills and clearance-rights nous to unravel and curate the many storied threads of Harvey's singular odyssey.

Frustratingly, the late '60s sides his short-lived psychedelic outfit Giant Moth recorded for Decca remain out of reach, but *Last Of The Teenage Idols* disinters a wealth of rare and previously-deleted Alex. Its many treasures include everything he did with SAHB, two rollicking live albums by early Hamburg-scene incumbents Alex Harvey And His Soul Band, 1964's *The Blues*, the stripped-down standards record Alex made with younger brother Les, and tracks from 1969's *Hair Rave Up* (when Gerome Ragni and James Rado's iconoclastic stage-musical hit London, Alex was in the house band). There's even a chunk of the great man's ill starred but fascinating foray into documentary, Alex Harvey Presents The Loch Ness Monster.

But the previously unreleased material by '70s titans The Sensational Alex Harvey Band is the main draw – it doesn't disappoint. The original tracklisting of SAHB's 1975 concert document *Live* is now augmented by four more songs from the same Hammersmith Odeon gig. Sgt Fury is particularly ace. The key SAHB rarity to emerge here, however, is No Complaints Department. Driven by Hugh McKenna's typically inspired piano, it's a song that was excised from 1977's *Rock Drill* at the eleventh hour – and which Alex Harvey Jr cited as the nexus of his father's grief when this writer interviewed him for MOJO in 2000. With Alex's heart-raw vocal addressing both his kid brother Les's electrocution on-stage while playing with Stone The Crows, and the plane-crash death of his manager and best friend, Bill Fehilly, it's a poignant listen which goes some way towards explaining Alex's – and thus SAHB's – 1978 meltdown.

The set's 64-page hardcover book, with its new essay by Scots writer Tim Barr, addresses many of the happier moments, too. David Bowie visiting Alex and his wife Trudy in hospital when their son was born. Alex kissing the bare bums of the dancers who enhanced SAHB's take on Irving Berlin's Cheek To Cheek at their Christmas 1975 Glasgow Apollo shows. The book also has loads of previously unpublished pictures of the ever-knowing, ever-photogenic Alex, my favourite being the one in which he stands slightly apart from his Giant Moth bandmates, one of whom is wearing a monk's robe.

Various

★★★★

Detroit Jazz City

DECCA. CD/DL

Don Was pays tribute to his hometown's jazz history.

Before its unfair share of knocks, Detroit was one of America's mightiest industrial cities. The concomitant music scene gave us the Motown Sound and the "total energy" rock of the MC5 and White Stripes. Most overlooked is the town's birthplace of – and nurturing grounds for – jazz greats including Elvin Jones, Joe Henderson and Donald Byrd. Musician, producer, Motor City homeboy and current Blue Note Records prez Don Was curated/co-produced this collection featuring Detroit natives that culls classics from his label's catalogue and mixes them with contemporary artists James Carter and Spencer Barefield. Proceeds benefit Focus: HOPE, a venerable organisation that's been in the trenches in the on-going battles against rigged economics and racism. Music is the valve that allows steam to escape poverty's pressure cooker. As bop veteran Sheila Jordan scats on Sheila's Blues: "If it wasn't for jazz music/I wouldn't be alive today."

Michael Simmons

Various

★★★★

Shazam! And Other Instrumentals Written By Lee Hazlewood

ACE. CD/DL

Diverse range of Hazlewood-penned instrumentals spanning 1958 to '68.

Lee Hazlewood will forever be celebrated for his '60s hits with Nancy Sinatra – and it's covers of three of these, These Boots Are Made For Walking, Some Velvet Morning and This Town, that, stripped of Hazlewood's words, provide the highpoints on this 24-track collection of instrumentals written by him. The first-named, recorded by Billy Strange, Hazlewood's arranger on his sessions with Nancy, is groovy a go-go, perfect for that mid-'60s exploitation movie party scene; Some Velvet Morning by the Afro Blues Quintet is cast as soulful jazz *à la* The Ramsey Lewis Trio, while This Town by Duane Eddy sees the guitarist's trademark tremolo and echo framed by atmospheric cello, strings and piano. Reworkings by Jack Nitzsche of Baja from 1963 and the following year's Zapata are also peaks, marrying thrilling surf riffs to the Wall of Sound.

Lois Wilson

Pere Ubu

★★★

Architecture Of Language 1979-1982

FIRE. LP/DL

Part two of the Clevelanders' vinyl box reissues: their 'Jazz Odyssey' years.

In his original Melody Maker review, Jon Savage reckoned Ubu's second album, 1978's *Dub Housing*, was "working on some hidden internal logic". And that was when their original incendiary sound was still recognisably futuristic garage rock. Albums three to five, boxed here with a platter of extras, sounds like Ubu considered logic for losers, or that only Beefheart's illogical approach would do. *New Picnic Time* (1979) retained echoes of their lift-off euphoria, such as One Less Worry, but A Small Dark Cloud's abstract wanderlust is their catalogue's most challenging six minutes. On the whole, *The Art Of Walking* (1980) went the furthest out before *Song Of The Bailing Man* (1982) reined in some extremities. From thrilling and ecstatic to confounding and even infuriating – *Bailing Man*'s A Day Such As This, and David Thomas's vocal freakery throughout, is all of these – post-punk Ubu is one of a kind.

Martin Aston

Sonic Youth

★★★★

Washing Machine

DGC/UNIVERSAL. LP

Unsung post-hardcore epic from 1995.

Initially hatched while grunge was on the wane and Britpop was in full swing, this ninth album from the once-unassailable Sonic Youth was the second on the trot to stiff, critically and commercially. Looking back now, the tide was obviously turning against them, and while *Washing Machine* houses few of the crossover punk-pop hits that turned Kim Gordon and Thurston Moore into alt rock's First Couple circa 1990's *Goo* and '92's *Dirty* (which also make a vinyl comeback this month), its pannings were unjust. The key accusation was that they were treading water: certainly, there are echoes of *Sister*'s radiant skronk-psych and *Daydream Nation*'s prog meanderings, but it was really about them reclaiming the avant high-ground, redefining their various outer perimeters, mostly on three guitars (no bass). Particularly tasty inventions include: Gordon's spindly, Panty Lies; Lee Ranaldo's uncharacteristically cute Saucer-Like; and Moore's mesmerising, 20-minute dreaming-in-sound finale, The Diamond Sea – not *Definitely Maybe*, nor *Nevermind*, but something exhilaratingly other.

Andrew Perry

Sonic Youth
Sonic Youth

BONNIE PRINCE BILLY
POND SCUM

Bonnie Prince Billy

★★★★

Pond Scum

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

Otherworldly singer's Peel Sessions rise to the surface.

Not so much one from the vault as the crypt, *Pond Scum* compiles three of Will Oldham's six Peel Sessions, recorded in 1994, 2001 and 2002. His songs often sound like recently exhumed grave goods, but this arrangement of artefacts feels particularly stark. Early Palace Brothers single Trudy Dies doesn't become cheerier for stripping away its clapboard-church atmosphere, while Death To Everyone loses its insinuating murk, becoming even more astringently disturbing. The previously unreleased, gently meditative Beezle doesn't skip the death either ("Not die at 32/But live to be old") and the cover of Prince's witness-bearing The Cross becomes a spare moral sampler, a one-man salvation army. "I'm here to sing you songs/In your room I have a corner seat," Oldham says on Jolly One (2/15), but this music, even recorded to come out of radio speakers, demands once more that he's the centre of attention.

Victoria Segal

Bonnie Prince Billy has a corner seat.

Richie Hawtin

★★★★

From My Mind To Yours

PLUS 8. CD/DL

Compilation of limited edition 12-inchers from minimal techno pioneer.

Released to mark the 25th anniversary of the label that Hawtin started with John Acquaviva, *From My Mind To Yours* deliberately echoes that founding techno document, 1991's *From Our Minds To Yours*. The atmospheric switches – from dreamy to brutal, from kinetic to contemplative – are similar but the technology has advanced. The first CD begins with the expansive, rolling No Way Back but segues into the stark, purely percussive Stretching. The 15 instrumentals cover a variety of moods and feels, each denoted by the change of pseudonym: FUSE, Plastikman, Circuit Breaker, 80xx – the last of which offers pure, updated acid. Sometimes the mood is claustrophobic, at other times everything opens out – especially on the last track, R.H.X.'s Xtension, which recalls the sense of discovery in early ambient and resolves the album in a satisfying sense of stillness in motion.

Jon Savage

FROM MY MIND TO YOURS

Phil Collins

★★★★

Hello, I Must Be Going!

ATLANTIC. CD/DL/LP

Phil's second solo sortie, accompanied by bonus disc of live tracks and demos.

Having exorcised his divorce on 1981 solo debut *Face Value*, Phil Collins' second album revisited his first love: soul music. The warm Philly shuffle of I Cannot Believe It's True – conjured by the Phenix Horns he'd nabbed from Earth, Wind & Fire, and the restless invention of Collins' drums – is a highlight, and his chart-topping cover of You Can't Hurry Love has a puppy-dog amiability. Elsewhere, Collins delivered his finest bloke-done-wrong ballad on Don't Let Him Steal Your Heart Away, while racy Small Faces pastiche Like China predicts an unlikely later flash of big-screen stardom. The slow-burn bombast of Do You Know, Do You Care and I Don't Care Anymore, meanwhile, bridge the muscular spook of In The Air Tonight and the stadium-bothering rock of Collins' subsequent *No Jacket Required*; an eerie demo of Do You Know… enlivens a mostly inessential bonus disc.

Stevie Chick

Count Ossie & Mystic Revelation Of Rastafari

★★★★

Tales Of Mozambique

SOUL JAZZ. CD/DL/LP

Rasta avatar percussionist's groovy, rootsy epitaph.

In 1960, Prince Buster groundbreakingly captured 'Count' Ossie Williams applying Jamaica's indigenous Nyabinghi hand drumming to The Folkes Brothers' Oh Carolina. Thereafter, Williams often popped up on JA R&B, ska and rocksteady records, right up to the roots era, when reggae's now-explicit rasta theology led to 1973's *Grounation* – a triple-LP documenting one of his Wareika Hill meets, featuring chants, orations, and vibrant brass from Mystic Revelation, aka Cedric Brooks's band. *Tales Of Mozambique* was '75's equally excellent follow-up, still carrying the title track's notably uncommercial lecture on the importance of historical learning (to wit: Vasco de Gama's Afro-plundering), but punchier in its arrangements. Ossie's vision somehow assimilates sleigh-bell rustling Pharaoh Sanders jazz (Sam's Intro), upright bass-propelled Sound Dimension funk (Run One Mile), and campfire rasta hymns (No Night In Zion – the last evolutionary step before Bob Marley's Time Will Tell) into a loose, spiritually uplifting whole. Tragically, he died in a car crash in 1976, aged 50.

Andrew Perry

VINYL PACKAGE OF THE MONTH

BOWIE AT THE BEEB
BOWIE AT THE BEEB

David Bowie

Bowie At The Beeb: The Best Of The BBC Radio Sessions 68-72

PARLOPHONE/BBC

Bowie's BBC radio sessions tended to flag key transformations, with his earliest – from May 1968 – an appealingly underproduced glimpse of the bachelor pad orch-pop phase (the jaundiced London Bye, Ta-Ta is great), and John Peel's David Bowie & Friends date from June 1971 probably the most significant, premiering Kooks only four days after it was written, while two 1972 sessions in full Ziggy flow are just extravagantly raw and exciting rock'n'roll. Four hefty chunks of 180gm vinyl exhibit these recordings at their best, with endearing interview inserts and DJ spiel plus a previously unheard quartet version of The Supermen from March 1970 and an Oh! You Pretty Things previously restricted to Japanese CD versions. Thirty-nine more reasons to love and admire the guy. *DE*

Badly Drawn Boy

★★★★

The Hour Of Bewilderbeast

XL. CD/LP

Damon Gough's debut is still standing its ground 15 years on.

Once suggested as Britain's answer to Beck or Elliott Smith, Badly Drawn Boy's first album had enough emotional heft and wilful self-possession to earn the comparisons to his American cousins, but it also proved that the woolly-hatted Damon Gough was a curious creature in his own right. Originally released in 2000, *The Hour Of Bewilderbeast* does sprawl and dawdle, but it fitted a post-Beta Band mood for expansive genre-roaming, charity-shop DJing and auteur-styled eccentricity. Despite occasional wobbliness, its embellished pop and subtly distorted classic rock has endured well, the timeless romanticism and self-flagellating disappointment of The Shining or Say It Again spotlighting Gough's handsomely rumpled songwriting skills. The second disc includes demos and the XL singles that preceded the album (although not the first two EPs), but added ballast cannot hide the fact this is a deceptively fragile record, one that was – along with its creator – rather swamped by its success.

Victoria Segal

Jack Costanzo

★★★★

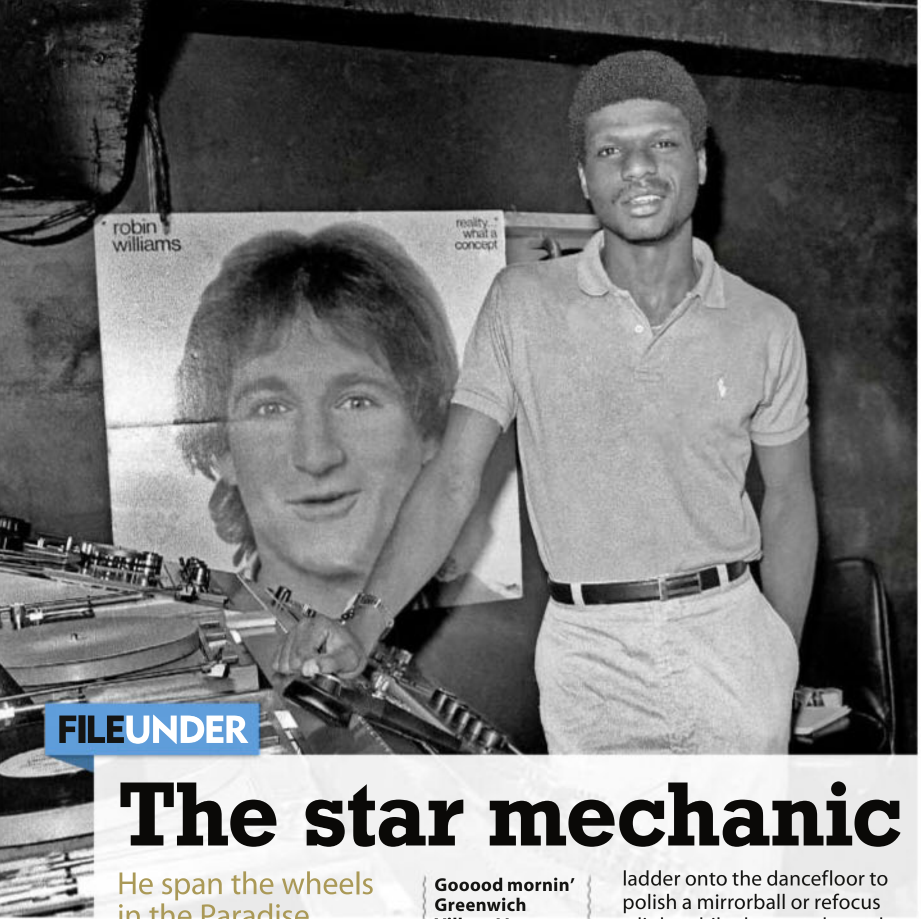
Mr Bongo

JAZZMAN. CD/DL/LP

A brilliant introduction to the Chicago percussionist, dubbed 'Mr Bongo' by jazz critic Leonard Feather.

An Italian American, self taught on butter tubs, Jack Costanzo introduced jazz to the bongos, scorching skins for Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Kenton and Charlie Parker. He also taught James Dean, Marlon Brando and Gary Cooper how to play and soundtracked Touch Of Evil and the Mission Impossible TV series, among others. It was as a bandleader, though, from 1954 to '61, the period this superb 'best of' covers, that Costanzo was at his most inventive; redefining standards – Ellington's Caravan and Hernandez's Cumbanchero are feverish, intense Latin readings, utterly compelling – creating future classics with descargas co-written with Eddie Cano – the shakin' Sax Con Ritmo, Latin Fever and Bongo Festeris – and in a thrilling collaboration with Tubby Hayes on 1961's Adjaye-Adjaye taking big band to another dimension.

Lois Wilson



Gooood mornin' Greenwich Village! Larry Levan, ready to spin the wax.

FILE UNDER

The star mechanic

He span the wheels in the Paradise Garage. The legacy of Larry Levan, by Jim Irvin.

What made Larry Levan, a guy who played records for a living nearly 40 years ago, so memorable that his name is still considered a draw? Was it a potent mix of outsiderdom, innovation and eccentricity? Or that he helped usher in an aesthetic that's still a strong presence today?

After being taught basic deck skills by Nicky Siano of the Gallery, Levan (born Lawrence Philpot – he took his mother's maiden name) began DJ-ing in 1973, aged 18, at the notorious NYC gay haunt the Continental Baths, when the resident DJ walked out. His reputation grew until, in 1977, promoter Michael Brody created Paradise Garage at 84 King Street, Greenwich Village, around his requirements, installing a unique and notoriously loud sound system. The Garage's opening night was a disaster and the A-list stayed away after that, but that meant Levan didn't have to care about impressing society and could simply satisfy the serious dancers.

His Saturday Mass sessions began in 1978 as disco's commercial clout peaked, and continued until 1987 while dance music retreated underground and new, more mechanical grooves started to proliferate. Levan was obsessed with sound and took care of detail; he might be seen bringing a ladder onto the dancefloor to polish a mirrorball or refocus a light while the crowd stood around and waited. He would disorientate them in other ways, too. He might play a record 10 times a night until they couldn't resist it. He'd purposefully crash two tracks or slam a record off mid-climax. He'd mess around with EQ, perhaps removing the treble altogether, and even changed the cartridges on his decks at key points in the night to make the records sound even sharper. He got to know the regulars in the 900-capacity room and so could create transcendent effects that the faithful talked about in awe. His influence spread and soon he was being asked to remix tracks in the studio for maximum impact upon his maven audience.

Twenty-two of his best mixes are collected on *Larry Levan – Genius Of Time* (UMC) ★★★★. There's his brilliant dubby mix for The Peech Boys' Don't Make Me Wait with its distinctive delayed handclaps and strange rocky interlude about four minutes in, the confident instrumental mix of Smokey Robinson's And I Don't Love You, where that amazing voice is reduced to a few wispy smears. He did great work for Syreeta, Gwen Guthrie (Padlock) and Grace Jones (Feel Up) and there's a beautiful, dry version of Brit band Central Line's Walking Into Sunshine which climaxes with multiple vocals interweaving to heady effect.

Levan's experiments lit the way for house and the future of dance. He died of a heart disease in 1992, just as that sound was exploding. He was 38.

GENIUS OF TIME
LARRY LEVAN

> "HE MIGHT POLISH A MIRROR-BALL WHILE THE CROWD STOOD AROUND AND WAITED."

WEST END
33 1/3 RPM
DUB MIX
DON'T MAKE ME WAIT (5:52)
PEECH BOYS
GARAGE
PADLOCK
SPECIAL MIXES BY LARRY LEVAN

David Amram

★★★★★

Classic American Film Scores

MOOCHIN' ABOUT. CD/DL

Five CDs covering the great American jazz composer's 60-plus years in film. From the piano'n'Kerouac jams on 1959's Pull My Daisy to more recent film and theatre work, this is pure wild class. *AM*

GIMME SOMETHING REAL

Ashford & Simpson

★★★

Gimme Something Real

BBR. CD

Already successful songwriters, *Gimme*… launched Nick & Val as a recording duo in 1973 and set a template of steamy duets and exulting, gospel-infused uptempo tracks. *GB*

THE KNICK
SEASON 2

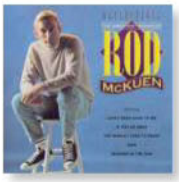
Cliff Martinez

★★★★

The Knick Season 2

MILAN. CD/DL

With Season 2 of Steven Soderbergh's US hospital TV series more nightmarish than the first, Martinez's eerie score for synthesizer, cristal Baschet and electric bass reassures, a pulse-point in a world of unknowable body horror. *AM*



Rod McKuen

★★★★

Reflections

VARÈSE SARABANDE. CD

Subtitled *The Greatest Songs Of…*, this collects the prolific MOR beatnik-poet's much-covered work, mid '60s to early '70s. Sung in his up-close dry croon, does his mix of cabaret, Europhilia and melancholy have to be a guilty pleasure? *IH*

Stud

★★★

Stud

OUT SIDER. CD

From 1975 Texas, privately pressed hard and soft rock, with prog elongations. Captain Boogie is endearingly gonzoid, the long title track jams evilly and the War Song depicts a sunny day interrupted by a nuclear attack. Beefy. *IH*

TANGERINE DREAM

Tangerine Dream

★★★

The Official Bootleg Series Volume Two

ESOTERIC. CD

Four-CD live box, with a March 1978 Paris show and East Berlin in 1980. On both, long-form explorations mix with synth rock with the last appearance of Edgar Froese's mellotron Mk V. Fan-advised. *IH*

SOUL FOR DANCERS 2
OUT ON THE FLOOR FIRECRACKERS

Various

★★★★

Soul For Dancers 2

FANTASTIC VOYAGE. CD

Another 60 tracks of soul, blues, jazz and R&B from the mid '60s, many not played in UK clubs at the time and there are smoochers as well as stompers. But as a listening experience there's a good flow of sounds; your party will be jumpin'. *GB*

SOUL SOK SEGA

Various

★★★★

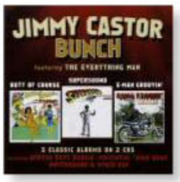
Soul Sok Séga

STRUT. CD/DL/LP

Subtitled *Séga Sounds From Mauritius, 1973 to 1979*, this killer comp showcases the "blues of the Indian Ocean", the Séga, an electric drum-led hybrid of funk, soul, jazz and blues rhythms, with a slinky off-beat groove all its own. *AM*

©Bill Bernstein/serenamorton.com

FILTER REISSUES EXTRA



Jimmy Castor Bunch

★★★★

Butt Of Course/ Supersound/ E-Man Groovin'

ROBINSONGS. CD

Three mid-'70s LPs from multi-talented Castor typifies the big-footed butt-shakin' funk of a versatile 'Everything Man'. *GB*

BUY
JAMES CHANCE & THE CONTORTIONS

James Chance

★★★★

Buy

ZE. CD/DL

Nice-looking reissue of Chance's 1979 hair-raising, high-tension jazz-punk fusion. A prescient debut, it anticipated No Wave and opened the door for later generations of sonic outliers. Three live extras include an irascible audience-baiting cover of Jailhouse Rock. *JB*

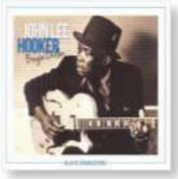
The Electric Prunes

★★★★

Singles 1966-1969

SUNDAZED. LP

Covetable, double gatefold vinyl with a great sleevenote by David Fricke has all 26 sides recorded in just three years by these singular Californian visionaries of the first wave of psych. Oscillate wildly, etc. *JB*



John Lee Hooker

★★★★

Boogie Chillen

BLUES CHARACTERS. CD

You can never have enough Hooker in your locker and this 2-CD comp has reliable choices from 1948-61 but focuses on '50s and early '60s. Almost all his essential blues are here, Boom Boom, Dimples and on to When My First Wife Quit Me. *GB*

The Litter

★★★

$100 Fine

SUNDAZED. LP

Famed for epochal '66 garage belter Action Woman, two years later Minneapolis's The Litter moved into heavier territory on their second LP. Nicely remastered, this is still a lumpy affair with Mindbreaker as the stand-out track. *PA*

volume, contrast, brilliance...
the monochrome set
unreleased & rare vol.2

The Monochrome Set

★★★★

Volume, Contrast, Brilliance… Vol 2

CHERRY RED. CD/DL/LP

Spanning 1978-91, the second odds-and-sods set of barbed retro-pop from versatile post-punk Hornsey polymaths is an absolute and timeless joy. *AM*

WISE AFTER THE EVENT

Anthony Phillips

★★★★

Wise After The Event

ESOTERIC. CD

Departing Genesis due to stage fright, guitarist Phillips embarked on a solo career, the highlight of which was this underrated second album from 1978. New mixes/bonus tracks add to the whimsical beauty of the original. *PA*

ROSE ROYCE
II
IN FULL BLOOM

Rose Royce

★★★★

In Full Bloom

BBR. CD/DL

Norman Whitfield-produced 1977 LP, the one with Wishing On A Star (UK Number 3) plus uptempo hits Do Your Dance and It Makes You Feel Like Dancin'. Stylish funk, it was their only US pop Top 10 album; Ooh Boy its biggest US R&B hit. *GB*

SISTER SLEDGE
CIRCLE OF LOVE

Sister Sledge

★★★

Circle Of Love

BBR. CD

Before Chic, producers Tony Silvester and Bert de Coteaux caught their promise on this '75 release. Strong hints of Philly soul as Kathy, 15, excels on Love Don't You Go Through Changes On Me. Comes with 10 extras inc UK hit Mama Never Told Me. *GB*

SPOON
GIMME FICTION

Spoon

★★★★

Gimme Fiction

MATADOR. CD/DL/LP

Ten-year anniversary addition of Britt Daniel and co's nervy fifth LP now includes an abundance of home demos and a fat booklet charting an oral history of the album. A real treat for followers of this venerable Austin cult. *JB*

ALOHA GOT SOUL

Various

★★

Aloha Got Soul

STRUT. CD/DL/LP

Early '80s Hawaiian soul, AOR and disco to fascinate musical anthropologists and yacht-rock completists everywhere, but might confuse and perplex anyone not lounging in a Maui hammock, blammoed on sweet Mai Tais. *AM*

Various

★★★★★

The New Wave II

MOOCHIN' ABOUT. CD/DL

Jazz fans spoiled further with this 8-CD set covering French, British, US and Italian new wave films between 1958 and 1962. Highlights are many but Tubby Hayes' set for All Night Long is a smoky twilight delight. *AM*

THE TRAX RECORDS ANTHOLOGY
COMPILED BY BILL BREWSTER
TRAX

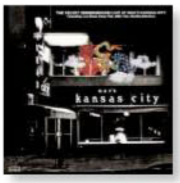
Various

★★★★

The Trax Records Anthology

HARMLESS. CD/DL/LP

Three discs of house classics from revered Chicago label, wherein disco was poundingly reimagined with sparse technology. Still-fresh gems by Frankie Knuckles, Phuture, Marshall Jefferson and more. *IH*



The Velvet Underground

★★★

Live At Max's Kansas City

ATLANTIC. CD/DL/LP

Further remastering of the 1970 Reed/Yule line-up live cassette. You get on-stage banter, but if you've got the 2-CD 'special edition' you'll have the extras. *CP*

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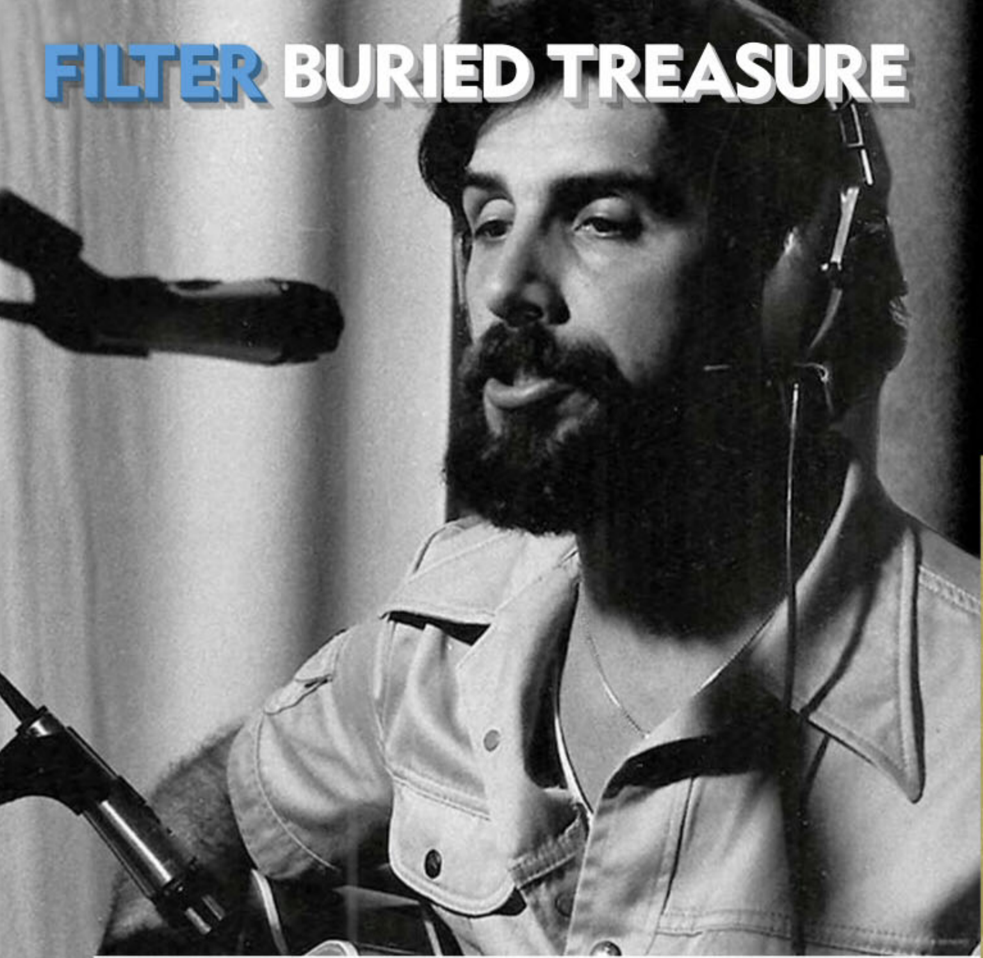
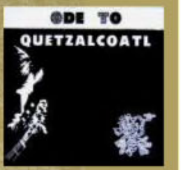
COMING NEXT MONTH

P.J. Harvey, The Last Shadow Puppets, Graham Nash, Charles Bradley, Mogwai, Yeasayer, Parquet Courts (below), Cheap Trick, Ronnie Spector and more…

PARQUET COURTS





CREDITS

Tracks: Drug Song / Free Indeed / I Have Seen Him / Mother / Morning Sun / Prayer / Lonely Faces / Open Doors / 666 / Waiting For The Rains / Secret Forest / Peace

Produced: David Bixby

Recorded: Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Chart Peak: N/A

Personnel: David Bixby (guitar, vocals), Brian MacInnes and Jane Symmie (backing vocals)

Currently Available: New Fortune Records (2014 reissue)

Be ye as wise as feathered serpents

This month's stateless traveller trapped in rock's deserted airport departure lounge; an acid-fried folk glimpse of heaven and hell.

Dave Bixby

Ode To Quetzalcoatl

NO LABEL, 1969

Michigan baby boomer Dave Bixby took a route into music typical for his time: after playing as a kid, he had his mind changed by The Beatles and The Beach Boys, started smoking pot and formed a band with friends, playing jangling garage pop with Peter & The Prophets. And then, in 1968, Bixby took part in US government-sponsored LSD tests.

"I felt like Major Tom," he says today. "It was a controlled study, an eight-hour trip into the evening with a debriefing questionnaire. The next day I felt a little bit spent. I knew I was not in my body or mind, but the observer watching from the other side. Recreational and daily use took me out of the mainstream of the human experience, and I had trouble with re-entry. LSD opened me up to other dimensions to the point I couldn't function in this one."

It's this strangely vacant state that can be felt in the minimal acoustic guitar and pained vocals of his 1969 LP *Ode To Quetzalcoatl*. The album was assembled as Bixby was saying goodbye to drugs and hello to new ideas of the divine: recalling his post-acid burnout as "being in hell with no way to communicate", he'd been introduced to a Grand Rapids prayer circle in 1969. As his mind began to clear and new songs began to flow, he started playing his acoustic guitar at weekly meetings held at the home of charismatic local Don DeGraaf.

Soon he found himself moving from the misery and solitude of the lyrically troubled Drug Song ("Life used to be good/Now look what I've done/I've ruined my temple with drugs") on to hope-infused religious songs including Free Indeed and I Have Seen Him. Eventually, an album was recorded in DeGraaf's living room: "It was done on a Roberts 2-track reel-to-reel with echo capability," Bixby recalls. "The echo-laden sound was perfect for the loner theme. I recorded the 12 songs in the order they appear on the album. I was used to doing concerts, and the studio felt empty without people, so I put on the earphones and just disappeared into the songs." After two four-hour sessions, two reels of tape were sent to Nashville for pressing at $2 per copy. It was sold to raise funds for the religious group.

The resulting album – ostensibly a Christian folk record – captured a man flickering between despair and hope, casting out the drug demons whilst trying to find room for a more spiritually rewarding presence. Subject matter and presentation were similarly contrasting. The title of 666 may scream hell and demonic fury, but the song's underpinned by a subtle and beguiling melody that's gloriously at odds with its prophecies of Christ's return and the end of the world. His smooth, creamy voice and elongated tones – not unlike Richard Hawley's – make the going similarly easy on Lonely Faces' tales of "Friends selling their soul, existing in a living hell", while Free Indeed sugars the pill of religious submission with a velvet folk-pop balm.

The finished album also aided Bixby in avoiding the Vietnam draft. When attending his medical – his lottery number was 64 ("that was going to make me dead meat bleeding out in a rice paddy," he says) – he submitted a letter from his Second World War veteran father requesting his exemption, and showed the examiners the contents of *Ode To Quetzalcoatl*. He was granted a temporary deferment to do counselling work with returning soldiers who were deemed a suicide risk.

The world was calling on him in other ways. "Religion and drugs have this in common: too much of either knocks you out of balance and leaves you empty," he says. Don DeGraaf's prayer circle had eventually turned into a multi-state cult called 'The Movement', with DeGraaf appointing himself leader and renaming himself 'Sir'. Under this guise he formed Harbinger, a new group led by Bixby, who went uncredited: the band was set up to tour, recruit members and raise funds. Things turned very sour in the years that followed, with accusations of brainwashing and manipulation leading to a relocation to Florida, where Bixby remained until becoming disillusioned with the group and leaving in 1975.

He drifted somewhat in the ensuing years, staying in a cabin in the woods of New Mexico, then earning a living as a performing musical cowboy at the Grand Canyon and later working in TV in Seattle, followed by living on a boat for several years before a shipwreck ended that.

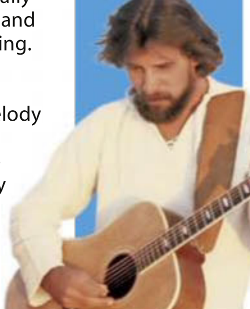
He's now back in Arizona forming a relationship to his old work. "These songs are now a psalm for me," Bixby says, "*OTQ* has a life of its own and that now includes me while I am still alive."

Its continuing reappraisal has revitalised Bixby, who's now singing and performing again. "The feeling of giddy has returned," he says. "It also came with a feeling of worth and confirmation that I am truly a folk singer and was capturing a moment in time and giving it to the future. Now, I want to finish life doing concerts, and to meet the people who get what I am saying."

Daniel Dylan Wray

Thus were the visions of my head: Dave Bixby keeps a recording date; (below) the singer in the outdoors.

> "LSD OPENED ME UP TO OTHER DIMENSIONS ...I COULDN'T FUNCTION IN THIS ONE."



Courtesy of Dave Bixby (3)

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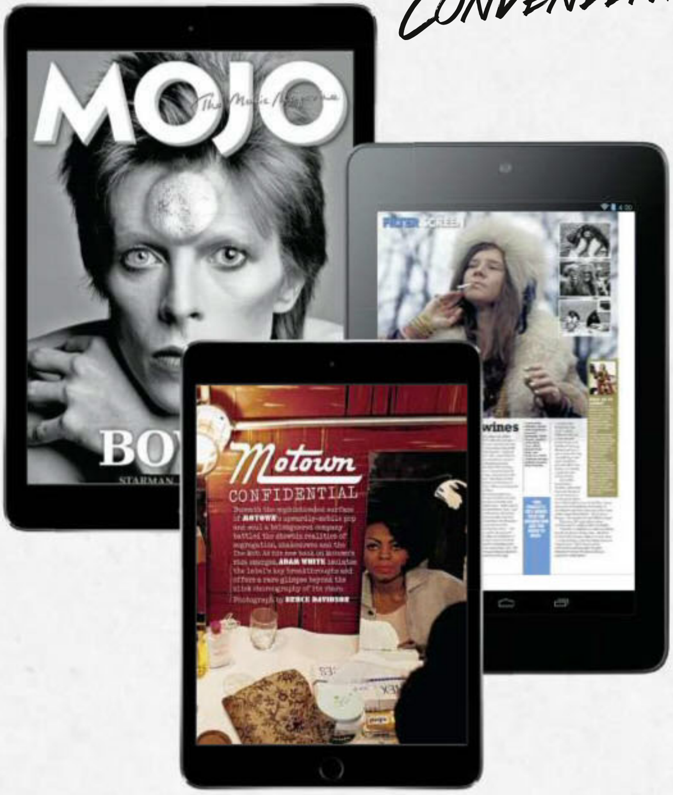

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TOM JONES
THE MICK FLEETWOOD BLUES BAND FEAT RICK VITO
UB40 FEAT. ALI CAMPBELL, ASTRO & MICKEY VIRTUE
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Volcanic rock: Magma in 1975 (from left, standing) Stella Vander, Benoît Widemann, Klaus Blasquiz, Bernard Paganotti, Gabriel Federow, Didier Lockwood, (kneeling far left) Christian Vander, with recumbent friend; (inset opposite) Vander in 1981.

Getty Images, Iconicpix/Dalle, Getty Images

DREAMLAVA

Magma

Zeuhl's space opera prog-jazzers. By Kris Needs.

After his beloved John Coltrane died in July 1967, young French jazz drummer Christian Vander wanted only to die too and join his first inspiration. But, after two years in Italy cutting his musical teeth in soul bands (including with Arthur Conley, protégé of his other hero, Otis Redding), Vander claimed to have had "a vision of humanity's spiritual and ecological future", forming Magma to carry on Coltrane's transcendent message after returning to Paris in 1969.

Vander blueprinted the bombastic hybrid of monolithic proto-prog, ecstatic jazz and Carl Orff chorales, which became known as "Zeuhl" (rhymes with "earl") music as he strove to tell his epic space-age morality tale of doomed Earth and idyllic planet Kobaïa (in his self-invented Kobaïan language), leading ever-changing line-ups, including stentorian vocalist Klaus Blasquiz, demonic bassist Jannick Top and (now ex) wife Stella. Magma were initially managed by recently deceased early Stones champion, Giorgio Gomelsky.

"Magma make the kind of music Ken Russell might use as a soundtrack for the firebombing of Dresden," jittered one review when the band made their UK club debut in December 1973, but they won future name fans in John Lydon and snooker champ Steve Davis (who used his winnings to bring them to London). After some watered-down commercial outings, Vander submerged Magma in 1984, exploring solo projects, before bringing them back with young musicians as the 21st century's ultimate cult band and music's longest-running space opera.

In 2014, Magma commenced marking their 45th anniversary by hooking up with the Paris-based Jazz Village label to remaster and reissue their 13-album catalogue, along with new recordings, on 180-gram vinyl (plus download). The group's convoluted evolution can now be appreciated as a cohesive but quite staggering body of work. Fasten seat belts but suspend all earthly constraints for the strangest, most astonishing music in history.

> "A VISION OF HUMANITY'S ECOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL FUTURE."

CAST YOUR VOTES!

This month you chose your Top 10 Magma albums. Next month we want your Earth, Wind & Fire Top 10. Send your selections to www.mojo4music.com or e-mail your Top 10 to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Earth, Wind & Fire' and we'll print the best comments.

10 **Magma** Magma (Kobaïa)

PHILIPS 1970, SEVENTH CD £22.94
JAZZ VILLAGE LP £12.95

You Say: "I like the 1970 *Magma* double album…" Brian Elliott, MOJO Facebook

First released as a double album, Magma's 1970 debut is worth hearing as the initial mission sketch. Produced by Laurent Thibault, the album introduced Basque-born vocalist Klaus Blasquiz who was recruited at Magma's first demo session after Vander overheard him scat singing. With its complex proto-prog arrangements and brass riffs, the effect is sometimes like 'Van Der Graaf Generator at the opera' as it covers the arduous journey from Earth to Kobaïa, where our heroes fall in love with its beauty, although Earth wants to destroy it. Decades later, Vander revealed Kobaïa was Earth. The concept continued on 1971's *1001° Centigrades*.

4 **Magma** Ëmëhntëhtt-Ré

SEVENTH 2009 CD £15.39
JAZZ VILLAGE 2 LP £12.95

You Say: "If one doesn't like this quintessential Magma recording, one probably won't like the rest." Edgar Lösel, MOJO Facebook

Thirty-five years after forming Magma, Vander revisited his *Köhntarkösz* trilogy, starting with 2004's *K.A. (Köhntarkösz Anteria)*, which featured music he'd written in 1972 as prequel to the 1974 album. In 2009, the 50-minute *Ëmëhntëhtt-Ré* concluded the trilogy by working familiar snippets which had appeared on previous albums as launch pads into an organic juggernaut of livid, flowing energy charged with incandescent chorales and mind-blowing ecstatic terror, with the bells-accompanied intoning of Funëhrarïum Kahnt lowering the curtain. Magma had never sounded so well-recorded, making for one of Vander's most towering achievements (though nothing was released in the right order, he's said).

Christian VANDER
Cygnes et Corbeaux

9 Christian Vander

Les Cygnes Et Les Corbeaux

SEVENTH 2002 CD **£16.49**

You Say: "Very different, but still epic and cosmic." Paul Fenn, via e-mail

After the jazz-funk-lite of 1984's *Merci*, Vander put Magma on hold and began on the solo albums which now stand as a parallel body of work. These include the solo voice-piano confessionals of 1988's *To Love*, 1992's stormy vocal-synth outing *Les Voyages De Christophe Colomb* and 1994's strangely unsettling children's album *A Tous Les Infants*. In 2002, inspired by Florence Nannoni's vivid bird paintings, Vander unleashed this rich tableaux of soaring incantations and billowing clusters, its dense sonic flocks intricately woven from banks of Stella-led voices and synthesized orchestra into an avant-classical masterpiece of Van Gogh-style splendour.

MAGMA
WURDAH ITAH

8 Magma

Wurdah Ïtah

SEVENTH 1974, CD **£15.47**
JAZZ VILLAGE LP **£9.75**

You Say: "Why? Because the celestial will of the Kreuhn Körhmann compels you." Andreas Johansson, MOJO Facebook

The second movement of the Theusz Hamtaahk trilogy began life as a demo recorded in three days with Stella Vander, Blasquiz and Jannick Top, which was hijacked by Yvan Lagrange for his bizarre Tristan Et Iseult movie. Initially released under Vander's name in 1974, it was regarded as a fourth Magma album, reissued on Seventh in 1989 under proper title *Wurdah Ïtah* ("Dead Earth"). Magma never sounded more stripped down as they portray the Time Of Darkness of an Earth being visited by the spiritually-advanced Kobaïans. As battle develops, the music goes from calm to storm via creeping chants, hypnotic riffs and Vander's martial undertow.

Christian VANDER
John Coltrane
l'homme suprême

7 Christian Vander

John Coltrane L'Homme Supreme

SEVENTH 2011 CD **£19.31**

You Say: "Where Vander takes it back to where it all began." Michael O'Neill, via e-mail

John Coltrane was Vander's motivation behind forming Magma and, as he grew older, the impact of the jazz man's death and legacy deepened. In 2011, Vander recorded a whole album dedicated to him, building around the pastoral meditation of Coltrane Sündïa on *Köhntarkösz*. Using piano and singers, recordings took place between July 17 (the anniversary of Coltrane's death) and 21 (his funeral), with Vander pouring his heart into every sung or spoken utterance, while Stella flies like a free spirit. Ultimately, this most personal labour of love shines as the most beautifully poignant offering in Vander's whole, colossal catalogue.

6 Magma

Üdü Wüdü

UTOPIA 1976, SEVENTH CD **£17.49**
JAZZ VILLAGE LP **£9.75**

You Say: *"ÜDÜ WÜDÜ!!"* Greg Biché, MOJO Facebook

First released in 1976, the first Magma set not confined to Kobaïan lore was dubbed Jannick Top's album by Vander, due to the bassist's increased songwriting profile and monolithic presence, particularly on the orgiastic 18-minute bass-drums duel of De Futura, with its merciless accelerations, skin-crawling chants and vein-busting climaxes, which see the two musicians doing battle in a boiling tornado of terrifying intensity (Top's tenure in the band gained a scary dimension after Vander later cited the destructive evil he unleashed in Magma back then). Such tumultuous mayhem could not be continued, resulting in the mellower jazz-funk of 1978's Top-less *Attahk*.

MAGMA
Félicité Thösz

5 Magma

Félicité Thösz

SEVENTH 2012 CD **£14.70**
JAZZ VILLAGE LP 2015 **£9.75**

You Say: "One album where I like *all* their songs from start to finish." Timothy Hannem, MOJO Facebook

Magma's extraterrestrial legacy continues to gain new jewels. *Félicité Thösz* arrived like a heavenly starburst with the transcendental Motown harmonies and twinkling melodic textures of its 28-minute title suite. 2015's "jazz metal symphony" Slag Tanz (pronounced "Schlag") presented one episodic 23-minute track, which showed Magma's ferocity undimmed as they visited a time when "there are no more people on Earth". Like most Magma tracks, it was forged live as a work in progress by the current line-up of bassist Philippe Bussonnet, vibraphonist Benoît Alziary, guitarist James MacGaw and pianist Jérémie Ternoy, plus singers Stella, Isabelle Feuillebois and Hervé Aknin.

3 Magma

Köhntarkösz

A&M 1974, SEVENTH CD **£16.00**
JAZZ VILLAGE LP **£9.75**

You Say: "Quintessence of the music 'zeuhl' …terrific and magical… a journey into ancient Egypt." Hattori Hanzo, MOJO Facebook

The second UK-released Magma album (again produced by Gomelsky on A&M) broke from the Kobaïan story to present what was later revealed as the second movement in a new trilogy called *Ëmëhntëhtt-Ré*, about a modern-day archaeologist discovering murdered Pharaoh Ëmëhntëhtt-Ré's tomb and its secrets. The 30-minute piece uses ominous chanting, shifting pianos and time-suspending beats to build unbearable tension before the screamingly intense climax kicks in, with the track's full devastating power brought out by the 2014 edition's vinyl remastering. The album included Top's violent Ork Alarm, with its gravel-gargling monster voices.

MAGMA Coffret KÖHNZERT ZÜND

2 Magma

Könzert Zünd

JAZZ VILLAGE 2015 **£41.75**

You Say: "To me, the best Magma record is their 1975 live album *Könzert Zünd*." Patrick Ducher, MOJO Facebook

Vander maintains the stage is where the magic happens, so the reissue programme climaxed with 12 CDs capturing Magma in their live element, before five decades of Parisian home crowds. The sets includes 1975's *Live*, 1980's three-volume *Retrospectïw III*, 2000's 30th anniversary trilogy performance, highlights of 2005 and 2011 shows previously on DVD (including a cataclysmic De Futura, featuring Top) and previously unreleased 2009 show, which finds the modern Magma firing on supernatural cylinders as they ransack recent albums. This writer was forever changed by witnessing Magma scorch stages over 40 years ago and this miraculous battle trophy brings it all back.

MEKANIK DESTRUKTIW KOMMANDOH
MAGMA
M.D.K.

1 Magma

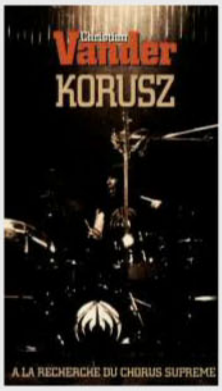
Mëkanïk Dëstructïw Kömmandöh

A&M 1973, CD **20EUROS** (FROM MAGMA SITE) JAZZ VILLAGE LP **£9.75**

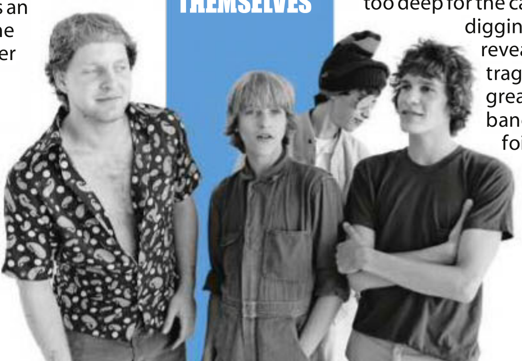
You Say: "Music for the apocalypse… get ready for the most intense ride of your life." Mauricio Alvarado, MOJO Facebook

1973's magnum opus (prod: Gomelsky) is usually hailed as Magma's masterpiece and is a good entry into Vander's dark universe. He explained that *M.D.K.* – about spiritualist Nebehr Gudahtt's evangelical march on Earth – was the third part of his *Theusz Hamtaahk* (Time of Hatred) trilogy. After the ominous blast of Hortz Fur Dehn Stekehn West, key Magma elements emerge in the Orff-recalling chorale, convoluted riffing and supernova virtuoso firefights. Magma's "extraterrestrial gospel opera" suffered at the mastering stage, now rectified on reissue. Vander alleged Mike Oldfield lifted his melodies for *Tubular Bells* when both were recording at the Manor.

NOW DIG THIS


Christian Vander
KORUSZ
A LA RECHERCHE DU CHORUS SUPREME

If you've got this far with interest still piqued, there's a bottomless well of further Magma-related delights, including live albums, DVDs and spin-offs, particularly Vander's. These include early jazz trio excursions, his Coltrane-homaging *Offering* of the '80s, two Christian Vander Trio albums made between 1990 and '93 and Les Voix De Magma's choral takes on his themes. 2000's *Korusz: A La Recherche Du Chorus Suprême* harnesses four seismic Vander drum solos from 1972-75. Seeing him up close in 1974 is the most incredible performance this writer ever witnessed as he blended impressive technique with massive power.



Bad blood on the tracks: The Replacements, 1985 (from left) Chris Mars, Bob Stinson, Paul Westerberg, Tommy Stinson; (below) the 'Mats "couldn't win for losing".

Deborah Feingold, Greg Helgeson

Nothing always happens

A biography of the legendary damaged '80s Minneapolis quartet offers joy amid the tears. By Keith Cameron.

Trouble Boys: The True Story Of The Replacements

★★★★

Bob Mehr

DA CAPO. £18.99

If you want blood, this story has got lots of it, invariably bad or poisoned. While the Midwest's outsider persona was a badge of honour amid '80s America's exploding underground rock scene, as author Bob Mehr observes, its malign realities were too close to home for brothers Bob and Tommy Stinson, Chris Mars and Paul Westerberg, collectively known as The Replacements: "children of war veterans and alcoholics, from families steeped in mental illness and abuse, products of Midwestern recalcitrance and repression."

The most grievous casualty was Bob Stinson: Mehr's book opens in 1995 with the guitarist's funeral. His death at 35 from organ failure, the cumulative effect of a toxic relationship with booze and drugs starting in his youth, came four years after The Replacements' split and nine after his dismissal from the band he had founded. But as Mehr makes clear, Bob Stinson – abused physically, mentally and sexually by his mother's boyfriend, his little brother Tommy's biological father – was only the most obviously damaged Replacement. As heartsore singer Westerberg notes: "The farce of it all: Bob going through treatment as though we're some little angels… We were as dirty as anyone." Given what a life-affirming rock band they were, the hardest truth to swallow from this tale is how rock'n'roll ultimately couldn't save The Replacements from themselves.

They peaked with '84's *Let It Be*, signing to Warners just ahead of Minneapolis friends/rivals Hüsker Dü, only to crumble when the prospect of commercial success intensified their innate fecklessness. Perhaps 'the 'Mats' were never temperamentally suited for any other outcome; after all, one of their greatest songs was an homage to Alex Chilton, the Big Star singer whose career path epitomised glorious failure. Mehr recounts in excruciating, priceless detail the occasion in 1985 when Chilton opened for The Replacements in Houston and the starry-eyed Westerberg got so drunk he incited a riot in order to get their shambolic gig pulled. But good writers see beyond the stock narratives and Mehr also happens to be a committed journalist, whose diligence in interviewing 220 people during six years of research delivers telling footnotes as well as attention-grabbing headlines. He captures the melancholy of the band's latter-day post-Stinson decline. In 1985, The Replacements' Warners A&R Michael Hill was told his band were too raw for radio. Five years later, with alternative rock crossing into the mainstream thanks to pioneers like the 'Mats, he was told their new album was too polished. Says Hill: "That epitomised The Replacements. You couldn't win for losing."

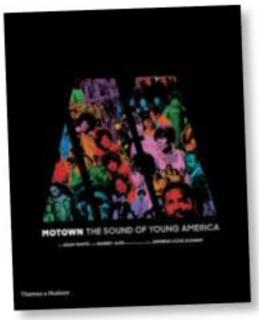
> "ROCK'N'ROLL ULTIMATELY COULDN'T SAVE THE 'MATS' FROM THEMSELVES"

In taking us through Westerberg and Tommy Stinson's awkward post-'Mats years right up to their late '00s reunion, at 520 pages Trouble Boys arguably goes in too deep for the casual fan. But by digging out the details, Mehr reveals the very human tragedy behind one of the great American rock'n'roll bands, as well as the foibles that made The Replacements so beloved by their true believers. This book is for every one of them.

TROUBLE BOYS
THE TRUE STORY OF THE REPLACEMENTS
BOB MEHR

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- As a fan of fellow Minneapolitan Prince, Paul Westerberg was once stunned to find himself sharing a nightclub urinal with the Purple one. "What's up?" said Westerberg. "Life," replied Prince.
- In 1985, the 'Mats' on-tour drinking was such that manager Peter Jesperson hired them a motorhome with a commode, only for the band to throw the toilet out of the smashed rear window while driving down the highway.
- In 1990, Bob Dylan visited sessions for the final Replacements album at LA's Ocean Way. Says engineer Clif Norrell: "He was saying, 'My son's really into your band.' You could see their eyes light up, and then Dylan goes: 'You're R.E.M., right?'"



Motown: The Sound Of Young America

★★★★

Adam White
with Barney Ales

THAMES & HUDSON. £39.95

Thought you knew everything about the Detroit label(s)? Think again.

Adam White, a British Tamla-Motown fan in the '60s whose career in journalism led him to Billboard and Universal, has found an illuminating path into the familiar story of Berry Gordy's labels. Barney Ales is a white recordbiz friend Gordy hired in 1961 to deal with white-dominated pop radio stations and record distributors. This meant that, in effect, Motown was two companies almost from the start: black creative; white salesmen and bill collectors. Four weeks after the July 1967 Detroit riots, which left 43 dead, Gordy addressed Motown's first national sales convention, in the still-smouldering city. To a nearly all-white audience, Gordy announced that he was proud to have "incorporated the white element without compromising our standards of excellence". Very pregnant pause before they got the joke. In 1969, Gordy pointed out to Ales that they had no black salesmen. "You only just now noticed?" asks Ales, baffled. To colourful anecdotes like those, add rare photos and you have another essential Motown work.

Geoff Brown

Los Lobos: Dream In Blue

★★★★

Chris Morris

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS. £15.99

East LA band's evolution from trad Mexican outfit to world music explorers.

As author Chris Morris points out in his intro, this is more a critical history than a biography of Los Lobos – though the group's journey doesn't lack for narrative drive. Launched in the early '70s, this barrio band would share stages with Public Image Ltd, sign to Warner Bros, tangle with Paul Simon over their work on *Graceland*, generate a massive movie hit with La Bamba, and build one of the more revered catalogues in rock music. A Midwest native, Morris's four decades living in Southern California serve him well here, enabling Morris to offer a sense of the terrain, both geographic and cultural, crucial to understanding the group's evolution. He establishes a historical context – background on the zoot suit riots, pachuco boogie music, and Latino garage rock – before delivering a comprehensive album-by-album exploration.

Bob Mehr

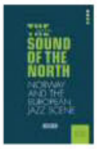
The Sound Of The North: Norway And The European Jazz Scene

★★★

Luca Vitali

AUDITORIUM/MIMESIS INTERNATIONAL. £18

Brow furrowing examination of Norway's eclectic contemporary jazz scene.



Despite a population of only five million, Norway's jazz scene is rich. The Sound Of The North is the first English language book to put Norwegian jazz under the microscope and takes in Jan Garbarek, Terje Rypdal, Jaga Jazzist, folk crossovers, the role of Germany's ECM label, the institutional infrastructure, contemporary music individualists like Ivar Grydeland and Nils Økland, and the two-way trade with artists like John Paul Jones and David Sylvian. This is a dense book, and thematic chapters do not bring a sense of a story evolving. Chapter One's immediate pinpointing of George Russell's mid-'60s Scandinavian adventures as pivotal may prove contentious. Karin Krog was following her own path from the late '50s, and Norway's own voice was emerging from at least 1929 when the Kristian Haugers Jazzorkester recorded Norsk Jazz Fantasi. But The Sound Of The North is still a significant, thought-provoking book.

Kieron Tyler

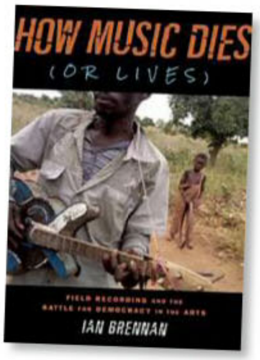
How Music Dies (Or Lives): Field Recording And The Battle For Democracy In The Arts

★★★

Ian Brennan

ALLWORTH PRESS. £11.28

American producer takes on global pop machine.



Ian Brennan is a successful record producer (Green Day, Peaches, Lucinda Williams) whose increasing despair at bland, formulaic Western pop inspired him to seek authentic voices in Africa and Asia, untainted by the global music machine. Part of the book tells of his adventures discovering the Malawi Mouse Boys, the Good Ones of Rwanda or the songs of Khmer Rouge survivors. The book is also a primer on the art of recording: never let the band hear playbacks until after the session is over; listen to what the musicians strum during the break – it can be more interesting; a well-miked jug or box can be just as good as a kick-drum or tom. The book could be shorter, and the tone can be grouchy, but it's also full of wisdom from someone who cares deeply about the power of real music.

John Bungey

What Happened, Miss Simone?: A Biography

★★★★

Alan Light

CANONGATE. £20

Arrestive telling of the high priestess of soul's life story.

This thorough biography of the singer and activist was conceived as a counterpart to Liz Garbus's documentary of the same name (see review, MOJO 261). That meant that the author got to sift through the same materials: interviews with the subject's daughter, Lisa Simone Kelly, guitarist Al Schackman, percussionist Leopoldo Fleming et al, conducted specifically for the film; also Simone's private diaries and letters and TV and radio chat. What makes this portrait so compelling though are the extras: think of the book as a director's cut; we get more insight, most importantly into the music she made. "Simone would not allow her work to be reduced simply to a product of anger, a push-button reaction to white racism that could be dismissed without an acknowledgement of the music's layers," Light writes. Or as Nina concisely put it: "I sing from intelligence."

Lois Wilson

The Record Store Of The Mind

★★★★

Josh Rosenthal

TOMPKINS SQUARE. £10.99

Deeply enjoyable music memoir from the founder of the Tompkins Square label.

A softback, glossy publication with rough, hand-drawn cover, Josh Rosenthal's autobiographical account of a life in music has the look and feel of a private-press vanity project. There might be a message here – always look beyond the cover to discover the gems inside – because this might be one of the most thoroughly enjoyable, informative, wise and good-hearted books ever written about the love of music and the industry (all kinds) that goes with it. Alternating between passages of wryly conversational autobiography and beautifully rendered profiles of (often deeply obscure) artists and labels Rosenthal has fallen for down the years, The Record Store Of The Mind will introduce you to a bunch of great forgotten musicians (Bob Brown? Tia Blake?), cause you to reassess your own record collection and make you fall in love with music all over again. Can be enjoyed with the accompanying Spotify playlist at therecordstoreofthemind.com.

Andrew Male

Every Song Ever: Twenty Ways to Listen to Music Now

★★★★

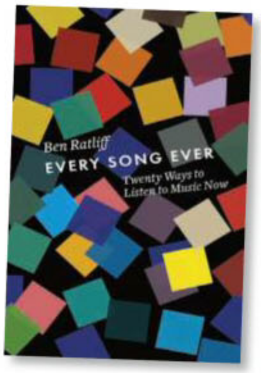
Ben Ratliff

PENGUIN. £20

A critic's guide to navigating all of the music in the world.

The days of sitting in a room with friends, each inhaling the same music at the same time, are over. Now we walk around with ear buds jammed into our skulls with all the music in the world to choose from. How has the very art of listening changed, and how is it changing us? How do we know what to seek out anymore, or what it is we're hearing? "Listening is a creative act, and at a certain point, it, too, can be virtuosic," writes New York Times critic Ben Ratliff, who dives into this thick music soup wholly, drawing zig-zagging connections, clearing a path through the often overwhelming morass. It's a dense, wordy read, through genres, names and eras, analytical but accessible. You will be inspired – you may even want to share your discoveries with a chum.

Jeff Tamarkin



Nina Simone: she sang from intelligence.

Faith and grace

From Daddy's girl to Dylan's squeeze, a new film follows the evolution of a gospel and soul star. By Geoff Brown.

Mavis!

★★★★

DIR: JESSICA EDWARDS. C

When Bob Dylan and Prince, both genre-busting music geniuses and dedicated avoiders of the limelight, step forward to sing your praises with obvious sincerity and deep affection, you've got your proper respect.

They do so in this warm and enjoyable portrait of Mavis Staples, the earth-shaking, spirits-lifting, soul, gospel and blues-folk singer, which bursts into vivid life whenever she starts singing. And she is singing before the opening credits roll, harmonising a gospel refrain with her road band, backstage before a show.

"I don't care to retire," she says, "I'll stop singing when I have nothing to say." But the topics – justice, equality, freedom, plain and simple fairness – that drove her father, Pops Staples, to steer the family group he built around the extraordinarily expressive and rangy baritone voice of his youngest daughter through gospel tours, then on to the folk-blues scene and into the soul movement, still pertain. It's a journey unlikely to be repeated in this changed world, yet as the news tells us with depressing frequency, and as Mavis notes, The Staple Singers' repertoire is as relevant today as ever.

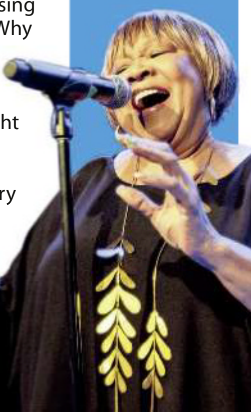
Mavis, 75 now, began singing in church aged nine and recording at 13. "That has got to be a man or a big fat woman", was folks' initial reaction to the child's voice, Mavis says, and indeed the baritone depth and preternatural power of her pipes was, and is, a marvel. Born in Chicago, the Staples lived on 33rd Street in an area that spawned Sam Cooke, Curtis Mayfield and Jerry Butler, among others, but her father Pops had been raised on Dockery's Farm in Mississippi with Howlin' Wolf and Charley Patton, the latter inspiring Pops' primordial guitar style and sound – tremolo'd and swampy, but sugar sweet. That, Mavis's voice and their increasingly adventurous material, moving from Will The Circle Be Unbroken, the first tune he taught them, through Uncloudy Day, their first hit record, to hearing Dr Martin Luther King preach in church, distinguished them. Pops spoke to Dr King afterwards, and deduced: "If he can preach it, we can sing it." They wrote "freedom songs" like Why Are We Treated So Bad – not assertive, but deeply radical by gospel standards – and recorded Sit Down Servant, the song that caught Dylan's ear and led to an early '60s connection between the young folk singer and Mavis. "Pops, I wanna marry Mavis," he allegedly, earnestly, announced. At Newport "he let me know that he mean it… we may have smooched," she bashfully giggles. But Pops heard Dylan's other message loud and clear; the Staples were the first non-folk act to cover Blowin' In The Wind.

After gospel success on Vee-Jay, Al Bell signed the Staples to Stax and soul hits flowed – US pop Number 1 I'll Take You There, the clarion Respect Yourself, If You're Ready (Come Go With Me) – and post-Stax success arrived with the Curtis Mayfield-produced Let's Do It Again, another US pop Number 1. Disco ended their career. Mavis endured failed solo starts until she self-financed *Have A Little Faith*, picked up by Alligator in 2002, kickstarted her lasting revival.

Mavis's present form is heard throughout the film – in her very obvious appetite to continue, singing a great Wade In The Water, in music made with producer Jeff Tweedy (*You Are Not Alone*; *One True Vine*), during The Last Waltz singing the best-ever cover of The Band's The Weight, and while visiting ailing Band-man Levon Helm at his home.

Family circle: The Staple Singers (from left) Pops, Cleotha, Yvonne and Mavis Staples; (insets, from left) Pops with (right) Dr Martin Luther King; simpatico producer Jeff Tweedy; (below) Mavis today.

"POPS I WANNA MARRY MAVIS,' DYLAN ALLEGEDLY, EARNESTLY, ANNOUNCED."



WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- Solo Career 1: At Stax, Steve Cropper, producer, says alone in the studio Mavis was so nervous she asked him to stand with her in the vocal booth. A row over publishing led to Stax not promoting her solo albums, she said.
- Solo Career 2: Two LPs for Prince's Paisley Park. The second, *The Voice*, coincided with his row with Warners, who cooled on promoting it, alleges Mavis.
- "Don't lose this," Pops told Mavis after hearing the last recordings made by the group, in 1998/99. In 2015 the tracks became Pops' posthumous *Don't Lose This*. She fills up telling the story. You might too.
- Her 1964 marriage, to Chicagoan Spencer Leak ended quickly; she had no children. "We were both daddy's girls," says Bonnie Raitt, "what guy is gonna live up to that?"

Marc PoKemper, Miikka Skaffari, Chris Strong, First Film Co (5)

ROD STEWART

FROM **Gasoline Alley** TO *Another Country*

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29 **SHEFFIELD ARENA**

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ARNOLD STIEFEL ENTERTAINMENT

Strings of life

A fearless innovator takes her songs of experience Down Under. By Sophie Harris.

Joanna Newsom

Sydney Opera House

None of pop music's great artists would – or could – have been designed by committee. Not David Bowie, not Kate Bush, Stevie Wonder, Kanye West or Björk. All have been deemed too weird, at points; obnoxious, unlistenable or niche. And yet their work has rehewn the very fabric of music and redefined its boundaries (or lack thereof). Joanna Newsom is certainly part of this gang of pop's great renegades, and her newest album, *Divers*, is her deepest, most difficult offering yet. Difficult because it deals in the kinds of slippery concepts that philosophers have wrestled with for centuries; among them, the pain of deeply loving someone in the knowledge that death is inevitable. How do we live with that? Making art is certainly a good start.

The delight of seeing Joanna Newsom performing live is that as an artist and a person, she won't fit any design. She is complex and unpredictable. Also, kind of a goof. Tonight, Newsom strides on-stage at the Sydney Opera House wearing a huge grin and giant red platform shoes; her hair is in a high ponytail and she has on a microphone headset. She resembles, for a strange moment, Madonna on her Blonde Ambition tour.

"Hi guys!" she says, beaming. "What have you been up to these past five years?" There is a pause. "You can tell me later." Two thousand fans giggle a welcome. This evening's concert is part of the Sydney Festival's 40th anniversary season, a month-long arts bacchanal of such diverse talents as Kate Tempest, superstar South African DJs and The Flaming Lips. This is actually Newsom's third time playing this storied Australian venue, but, she says, "It never doesn't feel magical and special."

Sitting at her golden harp, Newsom launches straight into one of her early songs, Bridges And Balloons, almost by way of a warm-up. Over the course of her set, she'll switch between the harp, a Steinway grand piano and a red Nord keyboard, moving assuredly between each (hence the headset). Newsom's band tonight comprises her brother Pete on drums, regular collaborator Ryan Francesconi plus two violinists and backing singers. While each musician is a multi-instrumentalist, it's still a pleasingly minimal set-up, one that gives space and air to *Divers'* densely written songs.

Anecdotes is the album's opener, and tonight it feels like the concert's real beginning. "Sending the first scouts over/ Back from the place before the dawn," sings Newsom, with the confidence and zest of a kid telling you a story from firmly inside her imagination.

On *Divers'* title track, Newsom's hands seem to shimmer across the harp's strings as its notes unspool. The sound is so dewdrop delicate one can't quite grasp it any more than one can catch a bubble, its transience echoing one of *Divers* underlying themes – that we cannot keep what is most precious to us. Music – particularly *this* music – is the one place we can seek refuge from the ravages of time.

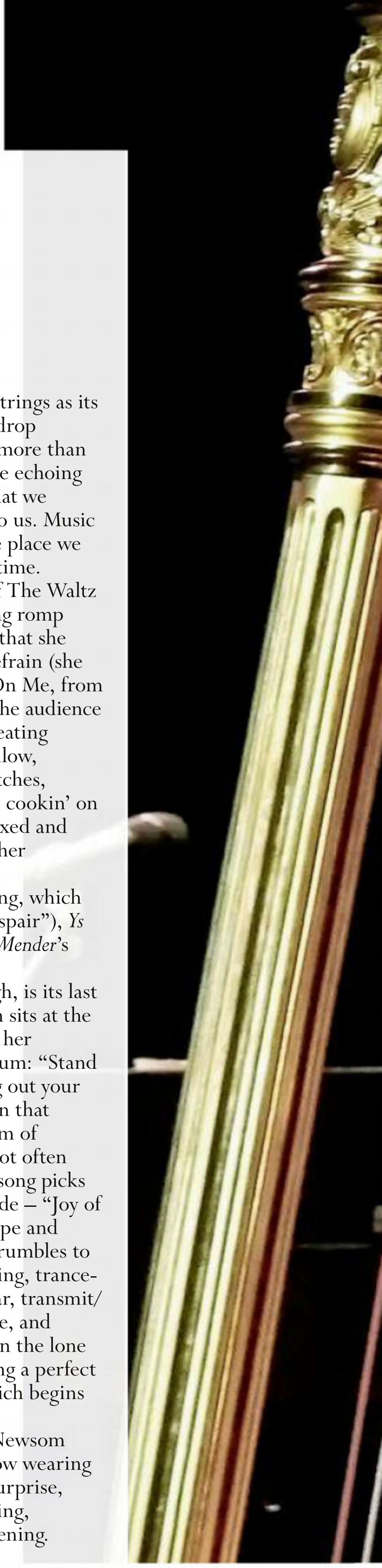
Light relief follows in the form of The Waltz Of The 101st Lightborne, a careening romp which has Newsom so carried away that she starts singing too early on the last refrain (she laughs). When she plays Have One On Me, from her 2010 album of the same name, the audience responds with extended applause. Seating herself at the synthesizer for the mellow, swinging Goose Eggs, Newsom stretches, smiles broadly and says; "Now we're cookin' on gas!" Then, "*Petrol*!" She is both relaxed and serious about what she's doing. Further treasures tonight include the single Sapokanikan (a hit, relatively speaking, which ends with the refrain, "Look and despair"), *Ys* vignette Cosmia, and *The Milk-Eyed Mender*'s Peach, Plum, Pear.

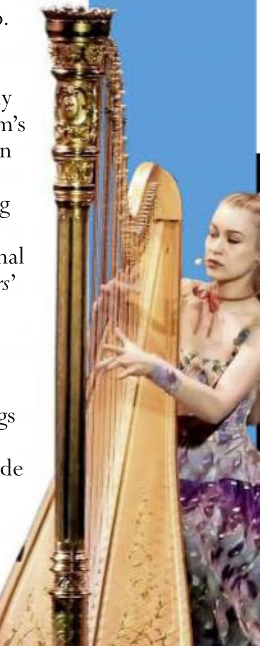
The set's real breath-taker, though, is its last song Time, As A Symptom. Newsom sits at the piano, and mournfully starts to sing her consideration of life's great conundrum: "Stand brave, life-liver," she coos, "bleeding out your days in the river of time." The notion that lasting love presents a harder problem of attachment than a break-up is one not often explored in popular music, and the song picks up force as its singer calls for fortitude – "Joy of life!" – her insistence equal parts hope and desperation. The band kicks in and rumbles to a grooving crescendo, Newsom singing, trance-like: "White star, white ship/Nightjar, transmit/ Transcend!" The song is *Divers'* finale, and there, as tonight, it ends suddenly, on the lone syllable "trans–"; that "trans" making a perfect loop with the album's first song, which begins with the word, "Sending".

A standing ovation follows, and Newsom runs back on-stage for an encore, now wearing a wrist-support. That comes as no surprise, given the heavy lifting she's been doing, metaphysically and otherwise, all evening.

"THE SOUND IS SO DEWDROP DELICATE ONE CAN'T GRASP IT ANY MORE THAN ONE CAN CATCH A BUBBLE."

String driven thing: (main) Joanna Newsom transcends; (top right) the Opera House in all its splendour; (bottom) Joanna at the Steinway with accompanists; and shimmering across the harp strings.





Prudence Upton (4)

SETLIST

Bridges And Balloons / Anecdotes / Soft As Chalk / Divers / Emily / Waltz Of The 101st Lightborne / Have One On Me / Peach Plum Pear / Goose Eggs / Sapokanikan / Leaving The City / Cosmia /Time, As A Symptom / Go Long / Baby Birch

SETLIST
Sputnik / London Can Take It / Signal 30 / Night Mail / Korolev / E.V.A. / Valentina / If War Should Come / Spitfire / ROYGBIV / The Other Side / Go! / Tomorrow / Gagarin / Everest

Here comes the science bit

Boldly bringing Floydian intensity and Reithian diligence to the space age. By David Hutcheon.

Public Service Broadcasting

Science Museum, London

Something is stirring deep within one of London's august Victorian edifices to enlightenment. You'd hesitate to call it a mosh pit – consisting initially of people punching the air at the right moments during Go!, then a couple of women getting up to dance, even clambering on-stage to greet the horn section – but though it is one small step for fans, it's a giant leap for museumkind.

Cosmonauts – Birth Of The Space Age, the exhibition the Science Museum is hosting until mid-March, is surprisingly moving as a testament to imagination and drive; symbiotically, it also puts flesh onto the bones of Public Service Broadcasting's second long-player, *The Race For Space* – available in the gift shop downstairs.

When the computerised, HAL-like voice of the band's disembodied MC announces "this is for the chief designer", and the band launches into Korolev, a glance at the museum booklet tells the story of Sergei, the clandestine aeronautics expert who inspired engineers on both sides of the Cold War. The newsreels on the IMAX screen behind the musicians do a powerful job, but it's an entirely different experience listening to Valentina when you have just seen the pod that Ms Tereshkova was in when she returned to Earth in 1963.

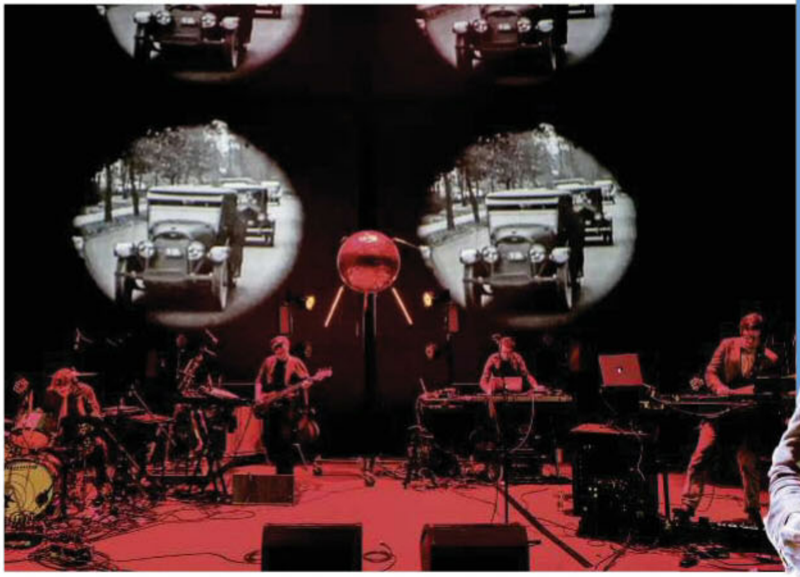
They have lift off: Public Service Broadcasting's urban spacemen, with J Willgoose, Esq (above right and inset below) and Wrigglesworth (bottom, far left) preparing for re-entry.

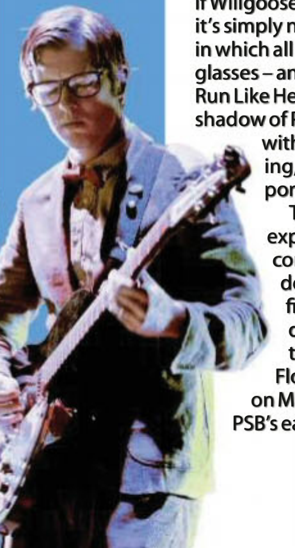
If the album was an impressive step up from their debut, it is on this tour, which began at Leicester's National Space Centre in February 2015 and has included Gene Kranz, NASA flight director for the Apollo programme, turning up at a gig with a CD he wanted signed, that J Willgoose, Esq and Wrigglesworth have outgrown caveats about their modus operandi. Though adding guitars, drums and synths to the words of government information films – or, ouroboros-like, to John Betjeman poetry originally set to GPO promotional films celebrating the technological wonders of the pre-digital age – can seem like child's play, there is real skill in doing it to create the emotional thump of The Other Side, where a heartfelt cheer rises from an audience slayed by a crescendo of silence as Apollo 8 goes round "the black side of the moon".

"ONE SMALL STEP FOR FANS, IT'S A GIANT LEAP FOR MUSEUM-KIND."

Of course, there is something not very rock'n'roll about this, a bit tweedy and offputtingly Open University – even if Willgoose plays a mean Rickenbacker, it's simply not very punk to have a group in which all four on-stage members wear glasses – and, especially when E.V.A.'s Run Like Hell-style guitar rings out, the shadow of Pink Floyd hangs heavy… just without the angst, the self-loathing, the anger, the bitterness, the pomp, the po faces et al.

That HAL voice better expresses where it is PSB are coming from as the encores are dedicated to "south London's finest", our own, recently departed, "interplanetary traveller". They may be the Floyd for the generation raised on Matt Smith's Doctor Who, but PSB's eagle has only just taken flight.





Simon Fernandez (3)

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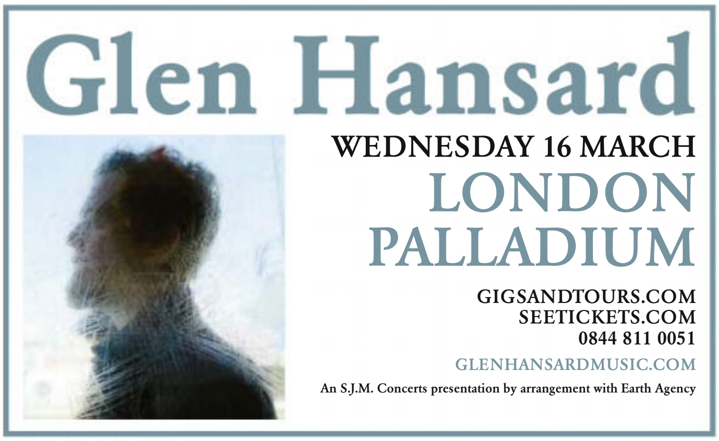

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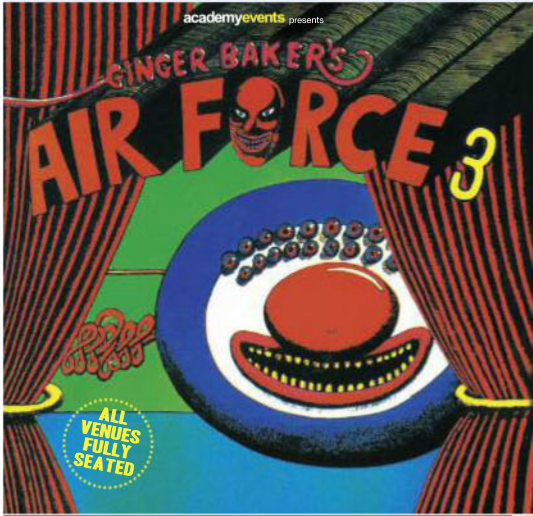

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The people's champion: Muhammad Ali gets busy at the ivories; (inset) his 45 of Stand By Me; (right) old romantic Billy Joel; (below, left) jazz planet Mercury; (bottom) Marley's *Catch A Fire* LP sleeve; (right) Dick Emery's comic character Ton-Up Boy.

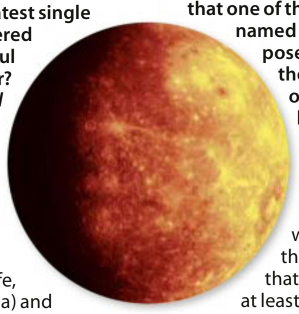
LIPSERVICE

WHO WAS THE GREATEST PUGILIST IN ROCK(Y)'N'ROLL?

Hear soft, stealthy, imagined footsteps in that sealed loft? Time for Dellar's rock, pop and comedy song update!

I read a news item about boxer Manny 'Pacman' Pacquiao's version of Dan Hill's Sometimes When We Touch getting over a million plays on YouTube. I have owned a copy of Cassius Clay's (Muhammad Ali) Stand By Me/I Am The Greatest single for some years and I wondered who was the most successful boxer to perform as a singer?
Joe Black, via e-mail

Fred says: At a guess, I would think that Irish heavyweight champion Jack Doyle had the edge. Known as the Gorgeous Gael, during the '30s he notched a fair number of knockouts (including his wife, movie star Movita Castaneda) and enjoyed a successful career as a singer, signing for Decca, touring and appearing at the London Palladium. Not that Movita, who recorded duets with him, stayed the course. She eventually moved off and became Marlon Brando's second wife. Christy Moore sometimes sings a song called The Contender, which is dedicated to the hard-drinking Doyle. So who else did well outside the ring? Well, Jack Johnson, the first African-American to become world heavyweight champ (1908-1915) may not have sung, but he did have a band that recorded Tiger Rag. He also had a nightclub that later became Harlem's Cotton Club, while his life-story inspired a Miles Davis album. Oscar De La Hoya actually grabbed a Grammy nomination in 2000, with a self-titled Latin-pop album, while Joe Frazier made a pretty good cover of Eddie Floyd's Knock On Wood, not to mention a later stab at My Way (released on the Knockout label). There's also Mike Tyson's appearance on Madonna's *Rebel Heart* album and Paul Robeson's song for Joe Louis, King Joe (The Joe Louis Blues)… at which point we must throw in the towel.



WHICH CREATORS BECAME CRATERS?

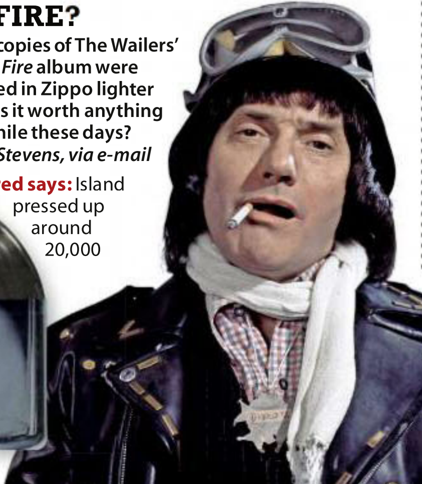
Recently, on an edition of BBC-TV's Pointless quiz show, it was mentioned that one of the craters on Mercury was named after jazz pianist-composer Thelonious Monk. Are there any other rock, blues or jazz musicians similarly honoured?
Les Garrett, Wimbledon

Fred says: The craters on Mercury are named after various composers, writers, artists and suchlike, the only stipulation being that they had to be famous for at least 50 years and dead for more than three years prior to nomination. The names range from Dali to Disney, Caruso to Kerouac and Bach to Lord Byron, though the only ones in the blues, rock and jazz categories are Duke Ellington, Scott Joplin, Muddy Waters, Sidney Bechet, Thelonious Monk and John Lennon.

DID THE ZIPPO START A SALES FIRE?

How many copies of The Wailers' *Catch A Fire* album were released in Zippo lighter form? Is it worth anything worthwhile these days?
M Stevens, via e-mail

The Wailers
Catch A Fire



Fred says: Island pressed up around 20,000 copies of the vinyl edition housed in the Zippo cover, designed by graphic artists Bob Weiner and Rod Dyer. It's worth around £90 in good nick, though copies have changed hands for far more. Island Records buff Neil Storey adds that initially the album didn't sell well and it was some months before it was re-pressed in a normal sleeve, now credited to Bob Marley And The Wailers, featuring an Esther Anderson portrait of Bob smoking a big relaxing spliff. Neil also explains that, "Esther was one of Bob's girlfriends (long before she'd been a girlfriend of Chris Blackwell) and she was featured on the front cover of the first Island album *Keith And Enid Sing*. What happened was, Island didn't have any pictures of (the real) Keith or Enid so they used two stand-ins. Esther Anderson became Enid and Winston Stona was Keith. Nowadays Winston is better known as the founder of Busha Browne's sauces in Jamaica – the best jerk seasoning on the planet!" He also played Detective Jones in the movie The Harder They Come.

WHO WAS THE BARD OF BERMONDSEY?

Years ago, around the time Blur were coming on-stage to the theme to The Italian Job, I went to a house party when someone played a light entertainment song about Bermondsey which alternated between Cockney dialect and a comedy posh accent. Any ideas who it was?
Greg McGill, via e-mail

Fred says: I think I know what you're on about – it's Beautiful Bermondsey from Dick Emery's 1970 album *Dick Emery Sings*, wherein the late comedian delivers ditties in several hues of vulgarity in the guise of his many and various characters, including the Bovver Boy, the toothy Vicar and 'Ooh you are awful' Mandy. It's £7.95 on Discogs, if you dare!

HELP FRED…

I was recently reading about Billy Joel's marriage to business woman Alexis Roderick (over American Independence weekend this year) and it got me thinking… which musician has stayed married for the longest? I run a Facebook group dedicated to ex-Hollies lead singer Allan Clarke, and I know he's been married to his wife Jeni since 1964… is that the longest period of marriage ever recorded for a musician?!
Imogen Bebb, via e-mail

Fred says: Err, I dunno about this one. Will a reader please sort out an answer while I dash to the pub for a swift half of cider?

CONTACTFRED

Write to: Ask Fred, MOJO, Endeavour House, 189 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JG.

OR e-mail Fred Dellar direct at fred.dellar@bauermedia.co.uk

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Alamy (2), BBC Pictures, Getty Images

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The organisers of the National Learn To Play Day, on Saturday and Sunday, March 12-13, 2016, have joined forces with Fender to offer this month's crossword swag: a Paramount Acoustic Guitar worth £629! On National Learn To Play Day over 150 music shops and venues across Britain will be offering free taster lessons on a huge range of instruments. Globally leading guitar manufacturer Fender will host their Learn To Play Day at the Intu Trafford Centre, Manchester on March 12 in partnership with the Registry of Guitar Tutors (RGT).

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www.learntoplayday.com
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ANSWERS

MOJO 267

Across: 1 Lou Reed, 9 Bob Dylan, 10 *Ommadawn*, 11 Pianist, 12 Green Gartside, 13 Ezra, 16 Ride, 19 *From L.A.*, 20 Nut, 21 N-Joi, 22 *Double Fantasy*, 23 Octave, 24 *Aja*, 26 Rancid, 29 Rockit, 31 Rewired, 33 One, 34 Dr. John, 35 *Dark Lady*, 38 Gem, 40 Syd, 43 A.B.C., 44 Avenue, 48 Dax, 49 Saxa, 50 I Love Her, 51 Hades, 52 E.C.M, 53 Stella, 54 Orleans, 56 Easter, 57 The Shamen, 58 Domino, 59 Donald, 61 Keb Mo, 62 Otis Spann, 63 Father.

Down: 1 Lionel Richie, 2 *Ummagumma*, 3 Eddi Reader, 4 D.W. Washburn, 5 Topper Headon, 6 *Edward*, 7 Alfie, 8 *Unite*, 12 Grand, 14 *Zenyatta Mondatta*, 15 *Actually*, 17/46 Ennio Morricone, 18 Spark, 19 Foo, 25 Gene, 27 A Dry Eye, 28 Chorus, 29 Red, 30 Car, 32 Ely, 36 Aurora, 37 Krishna, 38 Go Deep, 39 Maximo, 40 School's Out, 41 Dave Davies, 42 Small Faces, 45 East, 47 Easy Rider, 53 Step On, 55 Stomp, 56 End Of, 60 Nat.

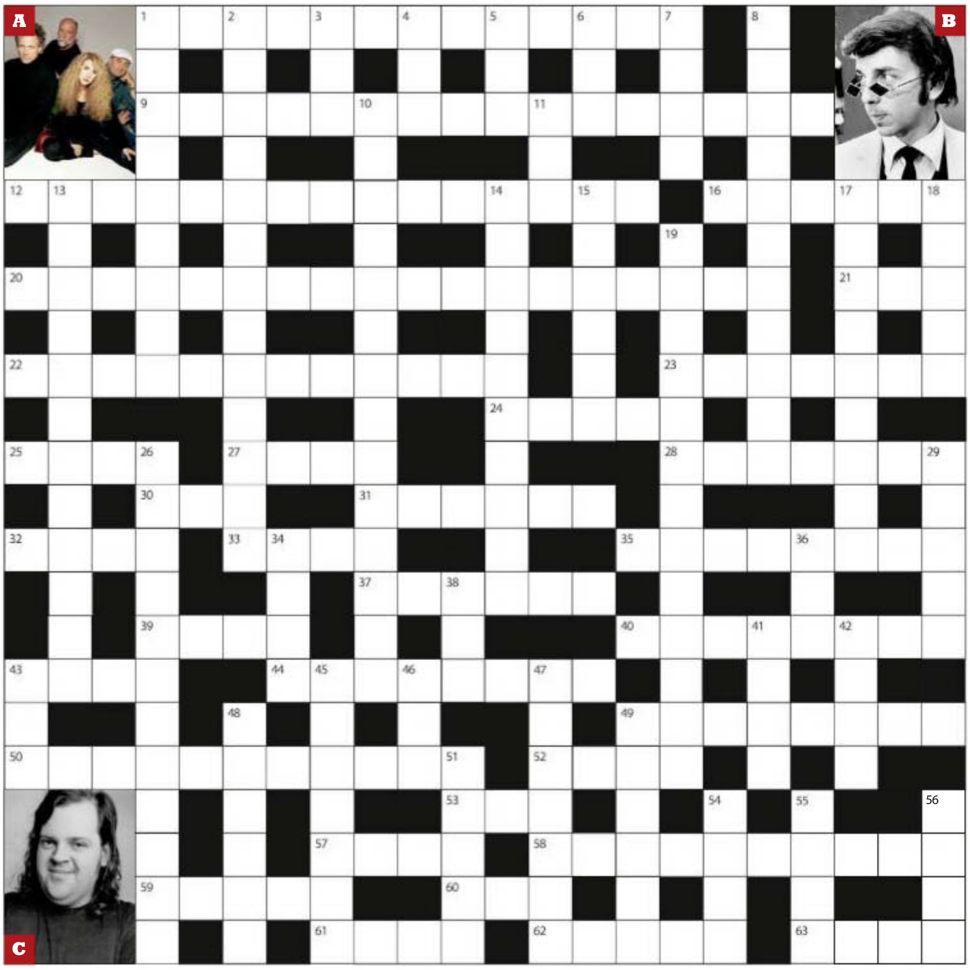
Winner: Andy Chrzanowski of **Reading,** wins a Limited Edition Sandblasted Ash Stratocaster®

ACROSS

1 He is The Killer (5,3,5)
9 In which Jimi Hendrix claimed he drove at 90 mph (9,7)
12 AC/DC's explosive album (4,2,4,5)
16 Blondie's was filled with lost souls (6)
20 Safe atrophied whale flips for a Procol Harum favourite (1,6,5,2,4)
21 Alan Parsons first woman project (3)
22 See photoclue A (9,3)
23 Nirvana's soft metal success (7)
24 Legendary Irish piper Seamus (5)
25 I'm Gonna Get Me - --- (Cat Stevens) (1,3)
27 Could be David, could be Dobie (4)
28 The hound of the Everlys (4,3)
30 Sixties underground club, linked with Pink Floyd (1.1.1.)
31 His After Midnight was first recorded by Eric Clapton (1.1.4)
32 Number of kicks for Kings Of Leon (4)
33 And numbered like George Harrison's cloud (4)
35 Curtis Mayfield scored this film (8)
37 Depeche Mode's visual hit (3,3)
39 Beach sung about by Martha & The Muffins (4)
40 Wings' debut album (4,4)
43 Dread spelt out by Ian Brown (1.1.1.1.)
44 Floyd Cramer's final romantic outing (4,4)
49 Genre hailed in song by Bowling For Soup (4,4)
50 Madonna album – dedicated to Fred Astaire? (3,3,5)
52 Not working, like Jeff Lynne's pre-ELO race (4)
53 Abba's plea for help? (1.1.1.)
57 Is it folkie Burl or modernist composer Charles? (4)
58 See 17 Down
59 This Billie Holiday favourite began life as Mon Homme (2,3)
60 --- Bamyasi, proffered Can (3)
61 Manchester venue (1-3)
62 The Sugababes' was coloured red (5)
63 It's fun to stay there reckoned the Village People (1.1.1.1)

DOWN

1 Rock's best-known upholsterer of furniture? (4, 5)
2 Their *Hi-Infidelity* album topped the US charts for 15 weeks (3,10)
3 Agreeable prog-rockers (3)
4 Jeff Lynne's string-driven band (1.1.1.)
5 One hit wonders of Steal My Sunshine (3)
6 "What is it good for?" wondered Edwin Starr (3)
7 *The ---- Parade* (The Doors' album) (4)
8 See photoclue B (4,7)
10 All About Eve's religious experience (7,2,5)
11 See photoclue C (3)
13 He was Little Feat's main man (6,6)
14 Vanilla Ice hit that employed the bassline from Under Pressure (3,3,4)
15 Danny, once of Oingo Boingo (6)
17/58 Fine or spit adoration gets mixed for a Van Morrison album (1,6,2,10)
18 No nightmare for Dizzee Rascal (5)
19 Shop visited album-wise by the Beastie Boys in 1989 (5,8)
26 Phil Collins' first album with Genesis (7,5)
29 Crystal who suggested you were Talking In Your Sleep (5)
34 Billy, once of Generation X (4)
36 Elvis sound-alike Donner (3)
38 --- Of The Line (Traveling Wilburys) (3)
41 Could be Ellington or maybe Special (4)
42 ---- Lion Zion (Bob Marley) (4)
43 Bill, whose *Life Is People* was his first real album in 40 years (3)
45 "I was mixed up when you came to me" (George Michael hit) (7)
46 Their album was *CrazySexyCool* (1.1.1)
47 Confuse Ted's wit for a Del Amitri release (7)
48 Variations required for those Sadness hit-makers (6)
49 Polite offering by Pet Shop Boys (6)
51 David, whose Rock On provided his chart debut (5)
54 Boston post-metallers had LPs such as *Oceanic* and *In The Absence Of Truth* (4)
55 With which Macy Gray did her best? (1,3)
56 Arthur Alexander's song about her, covered by The Beatles (4)



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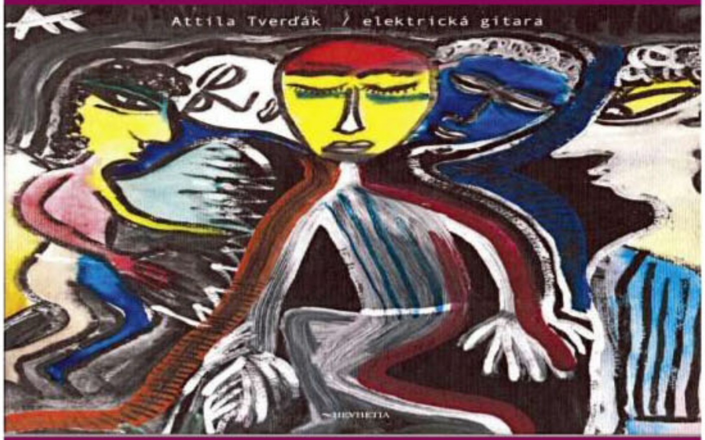

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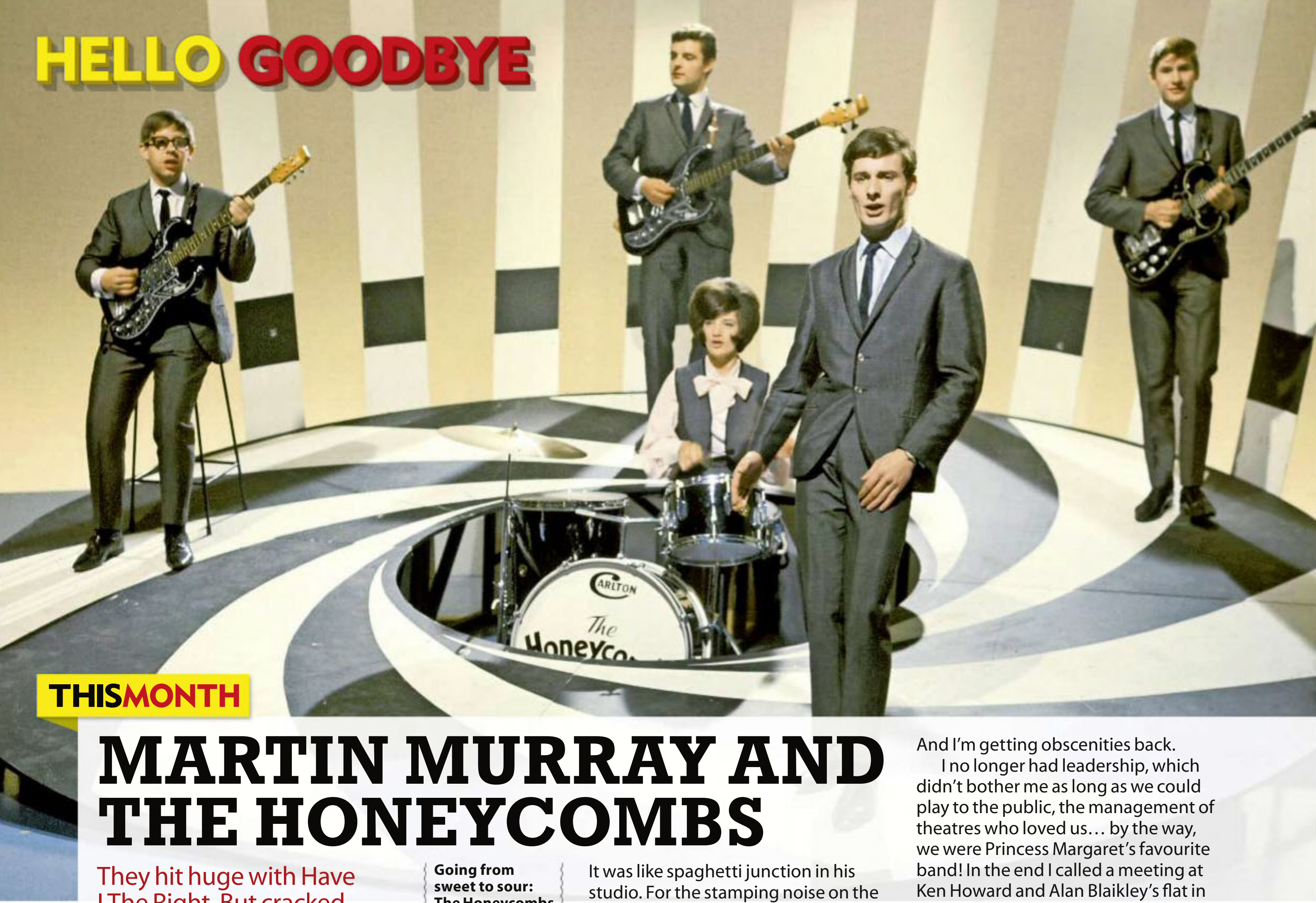

Going from sweet to sour: The Honeycombs play ITV's Thank Your Lucky Stars, October 17, 1964 (from left) Martin Murray (right leg in plaster underneath trousers) John Lantree, Honey Lantree, Denis D'Ell, Alan Ward; (below, right) earlier in '64; (below) Martin today.

THIS MONTH

MARTIN MURRAY AND THE HONEYCOMBS

They hit huge with Have I The Right. But cracked bones and a fateful meeting broke the spell.

HELLO LATE 1962

We rehearsed in my bedroom at home in Henry's Avenue, Woodford Green. I'd met Honey [Lantree] and we were unofficially engaged, she was working at my hairdressing salon in Mare Street, Hackney. She wanted to learn guitar. I had a male drummer who left all of a sudden, and he'd left his drums. When Honey saw them, she said, "Can I have a go?" and when she started it was like she'd been playing all her life. Her brother John became our bassist, and we auditioned Denis [D'ell, vocals] and Alan [Ward, lead guitar] at a church hall in Chingford just before Christmas in 1963. Denis had a great voice and fabulous stage presentation – he'd won many a competition at Butlin's and places like that – and Alan was phenomenal, he could play Bach, Schubert, you name it. It all gelled and we became the full-blown Sheratons.

We met [managers and songwriters] Alan Blaikley and Ken Howard at the Mildmay Tavern on Balls Pond Road [in early1964]. Ken said, "My partner here is floor manager for Doctor Who on BBC TV, and I'm floor manager for Z Cars." I said, "Come over here and start talking!"

He played Have I The Right to us, and something about it had a magic appeal. I'd already spoken to Joe Meek, and I said I'd present it with the other stuff we were going to play when we went to 304 Holloway Road. It was like spaghetti junction in his studio. For the stamping noise on the record, he had two or three microphones on the floor and a couple up the stairs. It was just the guys doing the stomping on the bare floor, Honey couldn't because she had on lightweight ballet shoes. People talk about Joe as if he was some sort of a monster, and he did tell Alan off once and went red, but I saw him as extremely creative, on the borders of genius.

Lou Benjamin, the chairman of Pye, called us The Honeycombs because we were "sweet-looking". Soon we were shooting up the hit parade at a hundred miles an hour.

GOODBYE DEC 24, 1964

We'd been working our butts off touring, and we got a call from Ken about a gig in this converted aircraft hangar in Peterborough. Right in the front row is a bunch of yobs who started boo'ing and giving us the 'V' sign. I dunno what came over me but I said, "John, when we've finished this number, down among 'em, let's give 'em a thump." I jumped down but the others stopped at the edge of the stage. I smashed a bloke in the nose and broke my wrist, and I broke my leg as well. Awful stupidity. Peter Pye, who I was teaching guitar to, filled in until I was back on-stage, in plaster.

But what was happening was most peculiar. I'm a true pro, and Honey and Alan were. Denny and John, I think it had gone to their heads, they weren't getting up in the mornings – I'm saying, We've got to be at ATV for nine o'clock, and you haven't had breakfast. And I'm getting obscenities back.

I no longer had leadership, which didn't bother me as long as we could play to the public, the management of theatres who loved us… by the way, we were Princess Margaret's favourite band! In the end I called a meeting at Ken Howard and Alan Blaikley's flat in Swiss Cottage and my dad – who actually invented the Berni Inn and all that – came to try and save this band from disaster. My dad said, "Remember what you've achieved, you could be the next Beatles if you'd work properly with Martin." And they literally didn't wanna work with me any more. They all stayed quiet. So my dad said, "Mart, I think we'd better go," and these are his words, and I never heard him talk like that, ever, "they're all a bunch of shits." They asked Peter Pye to take my place.

I had one more gig to do, the Christmas Eve Top Of The Pops, in the West End. We were miming. I put on a smile, but it was very sad. What was even more sad was, when I had to pick up my equipment from the van. They phoned me and wanted it back. Did I see them again? No. And that's more or less how I come to leave my own band.

As told to Ian Harrison

"A BUNCH OF YOBS GIVING US THE 'V' SIGN... LET'S GIVE 'EM A THUMP."

The Honeycombs' 304 Holloway Road Revisited is released by Angel Air on March 11. (Says Martin: "I've got my band back!")

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